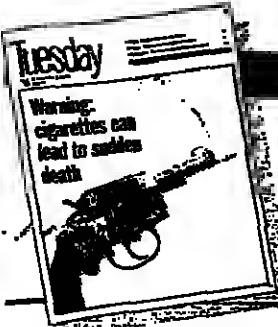




THE INDEPENDENT



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TUESDAY 14 MAY 1996

40p (IR 45p)

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Smugglers and their deadly scam

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Health: the parents' dilemma

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Designer label discount stores hit Britain

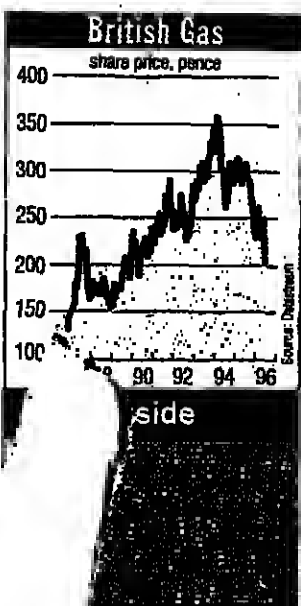


Tell Sid: the shareholder dream is over

Fears for rail and nuclear sell-offs as regulator's curbs hit gas shares

MICHAEL HARRISON
Deputy Business and City Editor

A fresh shadow was cast over the sell-offs of the rail and nuclear industries last night after Gas accused its regulator of a "smash and grab" that would rob its 1.7 million shareholders of an unprecedented



as they prepared to send of their cheques for Railtrack in the last week.

By last Friday about 200,000 small investors had applied for Railtrack shares with a last-minute rush expected in the final few days before applications close.

The huge gulf between British Gas and its regulator means that dispute is almost certain to be sent off to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission for an inquiry lasting at least six months.

This could cast doubt over the planned demerger of British Gas into two separately quoted companies - TransCo International and British Gas Energy - and the introduction of full competition for 19 million domestic gas consumers in 1998.

Mr Rogerson said an MMC referral was "highly probable" as it could not accept Ofgas's proposal as they stood. "If implemented, the proposals would represent the seizure of shareholders' income on an unprecedented scale and would undermine confidence in the whole regulatory system," said British Gas.

The company estimated that the new formula for capping TransCo's charges for five years from next April could reduce revenues by some £650m to £850m a year from next April and force it to reduce TransCo's 20,000 workforce by up to a half.

But Ms Spottiswoode dismissed British Gas's claims saying the new price controls could be met by a 4 per cent productivity gain a year and putting the potential number of job losses at nearer 5 per cent of the workforce or 1,000. "The proposed targets are challenging but in our view achievable," she added. "They represent a fair balance between the interests of customers and the interests of shareholders."

Mr Wilson said that it appeared the Government had been fearful of the British Gas upheaval influencing investors

Teachers wrangle as boy is barred from class



Time out: Graham Cram waiting with his father, Peter, in the entrance lobby of Hebburn school yesterday as teachers, local authority officials and governors discussed whether he should be allowed to rejoin classes. Below: Headteacher Madeline Watson arriving at the school with a police escort

JUDITH JUDD and FRAN ABRAMS

Strike action by teachers over a disruptive boy at a South Tyneside school was temporarily averted yesterday when leaders of the National Association of Schoolmasters' Union of Women Teachers, local authority officials and school governors agreed that a 13-year-old pupil should continue to stay out of classes. Instead he is to receive one-to-one teaching at the school.

However other teachers' unions suggested that the dispute over Graham Cram had more to do with a membership battle than with the educational needs of the other children at Hebburn school.

South Tyneside council said the agreement was an interim one until the school's governors met to decide his future. Union leaders said they would ballot their members on strike action again as a precautionary measure. The time limit for action under the previous strike ballot has expired. Teachers have threatened to



go on strike if they have to teach Graham. He was excluded last July after he allegedly assaulted a teacher but this was overturned when his parents went to an appeals panel.

Graham spent yesterday at school for the first time in 10 months. He was taught both alone and with several other pupils by supply teachers, the headteacher, Madeline Watson, and the deputy head. However, he joined the rest of the school for lunch and at playtime. Nigel de Gruchy, general

secretary of the NASUWT, said: "We have struck a blow for the maintenance of good order and defending teachers against violence in schools."

Last month, the union forced the parents of Richard Wilding, another disruptive boy, to back down and agree that their son should be taken out of normal classes.

But yesterday other teachers' unions suggested that the NASUWT's high profile anti-violence campaign was part of a membership drive. "Why

threaten to disrupt the education of every other child in the school when all you have to do is to refuse to teach that child? The union is trying to show its macho image," said one union source who did not want to be named.

A spokesman for the Association of Teachers and Lecturers said its own push for new subscriptions was more straightforward - it has just launched a site on the Internet.

Mr de Gruchy said that there had been disciplinary problems with Graham since he was at primary school. Last July, he added, Graham was leaving assembly when he fell over. He allegedly kicked and punched a teacher who, fearing he might be trampled, tried to rescue him.

Eamonn O'Kane, of the NASUWT, said the two inci-

dents had arisen because parents had been determined to press their cases. "It is not a deviant plan," he said.

David Lamb, the Cram family's solicitor, said the family were glad Graham was now able to take up a full timetable again though they wanted him to go back into lessons eventually. "His needs are presently being met and that is great news, though it ought not to continue indefinitely," he said.

Parents and relatives have assaulted teachers in nearly one school in seven, according to a survey of 2,000 schools published yesterday.

In one in five schools, parents and older brothers or older pupils from neighbouring schools have attacked pupils. In one in 10 schools intruders have assaulted staff.

Passive smoking 'does not cause cancer'

ER does not cause cancer, a group of scientists concluded yesterday after all the epidemiological studies which have been worldwide.

Report, which contradicts findings, was attacked by anti-smoking campaigners and charities who described it as "palpable" and noted it was funded by three big companies.

Passive smoking has been a fiercely contested issue in recent years. In 1992 the US Environmental Protection Agency classed Environmental Tobacco Smoke as a class-A carcinogen, estimating it caused 3,000 deaths a year. Many public areas, such as restaurants, airports and railways, have banned smoking.

Although no case linking passive smoking and lung cancer has been won in Britain, last year Beryl Roe and Veronica Bland, employed by Stockport

Council, won £25,000 and £15,000 for bronchial illnesses caused by passive smoking.

The European Working Group on Environmental Tobacco Smoke and Lung Cancer, analysed all 48 epidemiological studies on ETS and cancer published to date and measured exposure to ETS. They did not look at links to diseases such as bronchitis and emphysema.

They concluded that the relative risk of those who lived with a smoker contracting the disease was "statistically insignificant".

Professor Jeffrey Idle, chairman of the European Working Group, said when the group evaluated the spousal studies [mostly among non-smoking women living with men who smoke] the group concluded there was a relative risk of 1.01, where 1.0 means a zero increase in risk. In studies on workplace smoking, the group put the relative risk at 1.04.

"Relative risks of 1.01 and 1.04 are virtually meaningless in scientific terms," Professor Idle said.

Dr Richard Springall, an independent consultant in statistics, said past studies failed to account for biases in the data.

The group was commissioned by three tobacco companies, Philip Morris Europe SA, British-American Tobacco Limited and Rothmans International. Professor Idle said the scientists had conducted the study on condition their work remained free of interference.

"It is the judgement of the Working Group that environmental tobacco smoke is not a

primary lung carcinogen," said Professor Idle, who is a smoker.

But Richard Peto, Imperial Cancer Research Fund professor of medical statistics said: "Cigarette smoke is such a potent cause of human cancer that it cannot be argued that passive smoking is harmless."

A spokeswoman for ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) said the report was "appalling". "This study is funded by the tobacco industry and therefore we're not surprised by these findings."

N BRIEF

Too little too late?
Government was accused of being "too little too late" to reform Britain's children's homes yesterday, as plans emerged of a campaign to give them a more positive image. Page 5

Today's weather
Mainly dry and cloudy with some sun. Section Two, page 25



Secrets revealed of canines on the couch

NICHOLAS SCHOON

The innermost secrets of man's best friend are laid bare this week by research resembling the veterinary equivalent of the psychiatrist's couch.

In one of the most comprehensive assessments of canine character ever undertaken, vets were asked by researchers at Southampton University's Anthrozoology Institute to judge the behavioural traits of the 49 most popular breeds in Britain. Greyhounds, whippets, beagles and English pointers emerged as the most placid - exhibiting "low aggressiveness, low re-

activity and low immaturity". At the other end of the scale is a group of notorious little snappers which show "high aggressiveness and immaturity", including Jack Russells, corgis, cocker spaniels and border collies.

The researchers - whose findings are published in *Veterinary Record* - questioned 112 vets and 56 "dog-care professionals". Respondents were asked to rank the breeds on the basis of 13 characteristics, including their degree of sociability, propensity to snap, playfulness, laziness, submissiveness, and demands for affection. It was found that the breeds could be divided into

eight groups on the basis of three factors - aggressivity (territoriality, attitude to other dogs etc), reactivity (excitability, snapping at children, excessive barking) and immaturity (playfulness, destructiveness etc).

The same differences between the sexes emerged across all the breeds, with females rated as easier to train and desiring more affection than males. "I'm loathe to say any breed of dog is ideal," said the institute's director, Dr John Bradshaw. "One person's boring dog is another's perfect dog. Good family dogs like the golden retriever which were affec-

tionate and low in aggressiveness also tended to be highly immature - with a tendency to whine, bark and destroy things if left alone. "Border collies have very high reactivity because they were bred to work hard," he said. "It's not surprising you find large numbers turning up in behaviour clinics - they're not suited for a very urban life."

Dr Bradshaw said that while there were big differences between breeds, owners' behaviour was just as important in determining a dog's character. "The first 14 weeks are crucial. You can easily turn a golden retriever into a very nasty dog."



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Richard and Judy give OJ another trial

PAUL FIELD

It had been expected to be a lightweight affair, giving OJ Simpson free rein to talk of his life after the American trial of the century, but his live ITV interview with Richard Madeley and Judy Finnigan last night pulled few punches.

Within minutes of going on air, the former American football star admitted he had been on the verge of suicide after the killing of his ex-wife Nicole, claiming he sped away from police in his Bronco because he was hurt by the suspicion he murdered her.

Clearly surprised at the robust questioning from the husband and wife chat show hosts, he said: "Essentially I was being attacked for the first time in my life."

"I wasn't used to it. I was hurt. I was in a lot of pain and I just wanted the pain to stop. I turned to a friend and said: 'Take me to Nicole's grave.' When we got there the police had it cordoned off so we couldn't get in."

Asked why he thought people still considered him guilty of the murders of his ex-wife and her friend, Ron Goldman, despite his acquittal, he said: "I can't really blame them. If I was exposed to what they were, daily, after I had been to work, I would have thought the same."

He said he had seen the television coverage during the trial, but when he saw the daily reports, he said he would ask himself: "Were they in the same court room?"

He was then questioned about a note he had left, saying: "Don't feel sorry for me, I have had a great life."

Mr Madeley asked if this had been a suicide note. "For the first time in my life I was suffering some despair," he said.

Mr Simpson looked uncomfortable in his first British television appearance since he was cleared of the double murder. He appeared angry when his interviewers insisted he answer their direct questions.

He said his children were unaware of what had happened when he first learned that his wife was dead.

Before the interview Mr Simpson looked slightly less ill at ease as he stood in front of massed ranks of reporters and photographers. He had flown by private jet from Heathrow to Manchester, arriving at the Granada studios at 3.30pm. He said he had not been told of any questions in advance which was borne out in the programme.

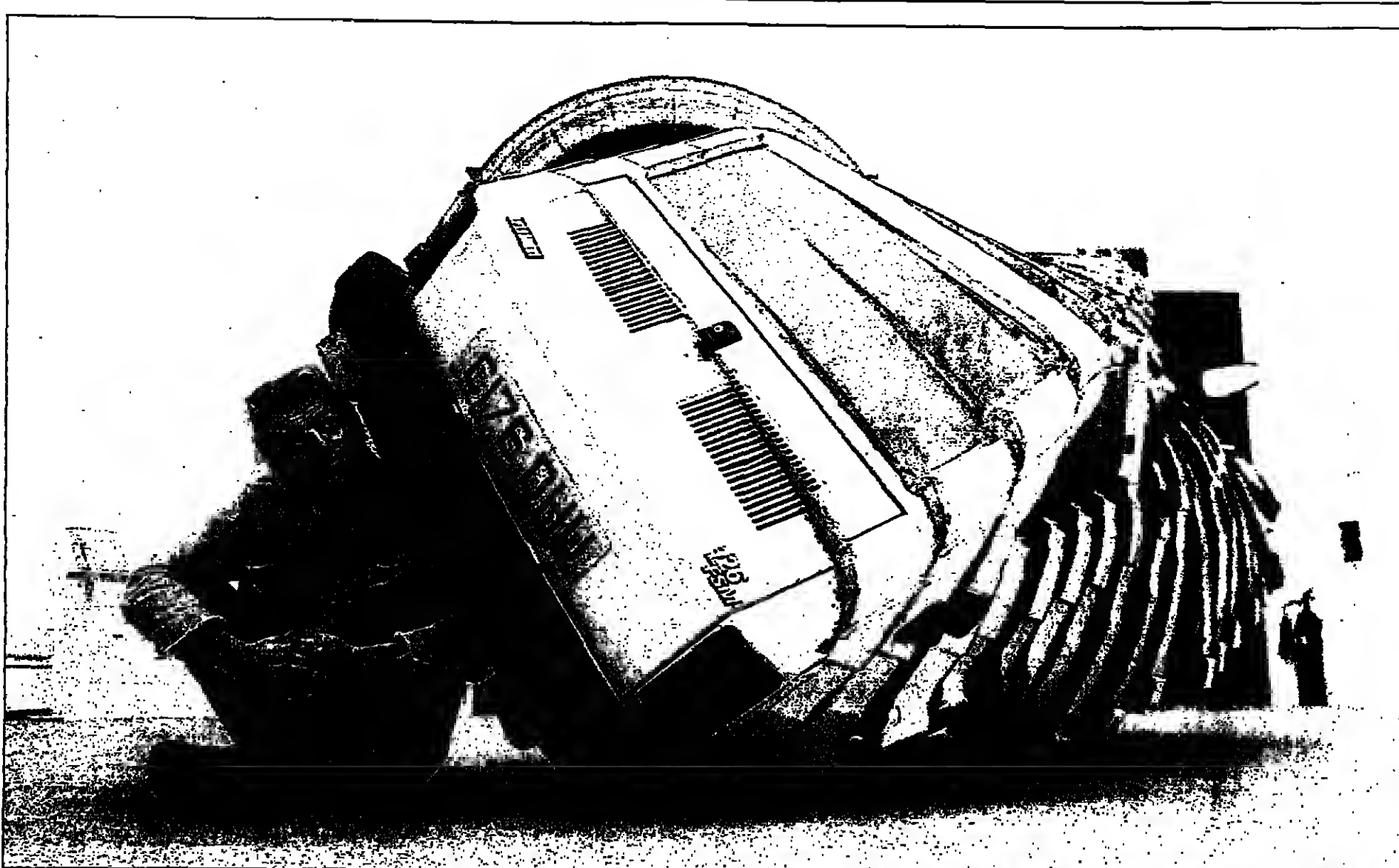
In an interview with the black newspaper *The Voice*, published today, Mr Simpson admitted his famous trial had left him "flat broke and in debt".

However he denied he was profiting from his lengthy court appearance by taking in a media tour of Britain, which moves to Oxford this evening when he will address the Union.

"I haven't profited from this terrible incident. Before this my life was very comfortable. Right now I have no financial security." At one time it was estimated the American football and movie star had a fortune of nearly £7m but since the trial his earnings have plummeted.



OJ Simpson: Hurt by the allegations of murder



Slice of life: Peter Mountain with one of the sculptures he is exhibiting at Worcester Museum. 'I work intuitively and deal in shapes and form' Photograph: Dan Chung/Newstream

Sculptor at cutting edge of auto-art

An artistic slice of life or another dent in the tarnished image of the car? Whichever, sculptor Peter Mountain believes the trusty Fiat 126 provides the perfect vehicle for his work, writes Richard Smith.

Two of his cars, each chopped into 23 segments and welded back together, are on show at an exhibition - "Dissecting the Dream" - in Worcester Museum.

But for 39-year-old Mr Mountain, from Bristol, this is only the beginning - he intends to explore the theme further by creating another 18 Fiat 126 sculptures from the eight cars that he has rescued from scrap.

"I'm pretending to be a living computer," said Mr Mountain. "I'm manipulating images in real life that a computer can change on a screen... I work intuitively and deal in shapes and form. I'm not here to make a political statement about the car. I'm here to make something visually challenging and the car is a strong object - it's perfect for what I want to do."

Sara Thornton was 'killer, liar and alcoholic'

WILL BENNETT

Sara Thornton, who stabbed her violent, drunken husband to death as he lay in an alcoholic stupor, was a "pathological liar" motivated by financial greed, it was alleged yesterday.

As the prosecution described the killing, Mrs Thornton broke down in the dock at Oxford Crown Court and sobbed: "Please take me home." The hearing was temporarily adjourned while she recovered her composure.

Mrs Thornton, 41, is on trial for the second time accused of the murder of her husband, Malcolm, at the couple's home in Atherstone, Warwickshire, in 1989.

Mr Justice Scott Baker, the judge, told the jury of eight men and four women, that the retrial had been ordered by the Court of Appeal. He said that they must reach their verdict on the evidence put before them alone.

Brian Escott QC, for the prosecution, said that Mr and Mrs Thornton met in 1987 when he was 42 and she was 10 years younger.

They were both heavy drinkers and alcohol was to play an important part in the case.

He continued: "She possessed a further factor, another degree to the dangerous cocktail of their relationship. This was a personality disorder which was only identified by doctors after the death of her husband."

"The effect of it was to make her compulsively attention-seeking. One of the ways she did that was to shock people by what she said, what she did, how she dressed and how she undressed."

"It is an unhappy aspect of her personality that she frequently tends to tell people what she wants them to hear regardless of the reality. Another cruel way of putting it is that she is, in truth, a pathological liar."

Mrs Thornton was sacked from a tele-sales job for drinking and her husband's alcoholism became steadily worse and he began to hit her. She spent a month in a drying-out



Sara Thornton: She broke down in court on the first day of second trial for murder of her drunken husband

clinic, but was back drinking soon afterwards.

In 1989, Mr Thornton lost his licence for drink-driving and had to resign from his job as a security officer. He was arrested for being drunk and disorderly and later punched Mrs Thornton in the face during a row.

Mr Escott QC said that after one episode of Mr Thornton's heavy drinking his wife was told by Helen Thomas, a work-

mate, "you have got to sort this out".

Mrs Thornton replied: "The only way to sort this out is to kill him."

On the 13 June, 1989, after spending two nights elsewhere, Mr Thornton returned home and by the evening was sprawled out on the sofa in a drunken stupor. His wife and his son, Martin, who was living with them, decided to go out to a pub.

Before they went out, Mrs Thornton wrote "Bastard Thornton, I hate you," in

lipstick on a mirror. When they came back, Martin went to bed.

Mr Escott QC said that Mrs Thornton had always claimed that she stabbed her husband with a kitchen knife by accident after a row during which he accused her of being a prostitute.

But he said that Martin, who was not fully asleep, "heard a murmured conversation, no raised voices, no shouts".

He then heard someone rummaging through the cutlery drawer in the kitchen.

He said: "Martin heard his father scream and came downstairs to be greeted by Sara saying: 'Martin, I have killed your father.'"

In fact, Mr Thornton died several hours later while in hospital.

The killing, said Mr Escott QC, was motivated wholly or partly by financial considerations.

He continued: "Sara Thornton had a fixation that if she left Malcolm before she had been married to him for a year she would lose her interest in the house."

Mr Escott QC said that this may not have actually been the legal situation, but Mrs Thornton thought it was and so killing her husband was "the ultimate solution".

The case continues today.

'The only way to sort this out is to kill him'

Murder jury told of sex fantasies

MICHAEL STREETER

A paedophile accused of murdering nine-year-old Daniel Handley told a jury yesterday that he was sexually abused at the age of four while living in a Barnardo's home.

Brett Tyler, 30, also told the Old Bailey that he had sex with a male friend at the age of 12 and had a criminal record for indecency with young boys.

Tyler, who denies murdering Daniel but admits bugging and falsely imprisoning him on 2 October 1994, said he had been put in the home when he

was six months old. Under examination by Rock Tansey QC, for the defence, Tyler, who remained in the home until he was eight, told the court he had five or six times gone off with a man known as John and had sexual intercourse.

After a succession of odd jobs Tyler had been arrested for indecency with young boys and sentenced to four years in prison. He was transferred to Wormwood Scrubs, where he met Timothy Morris, 33, of Leyton, east London, who admits murdering, bugging and falsely imprisoning Daniel.

Tyler said that following his release from jail he had gone on the first of many trips to the Philippines where he had sexual intercourse with boys aged between 11 and 14. Back in Britain he had driven around London with Morris, who had fantasised about abducting a young boy and then killing him.

Tyler said he never believed that Morris would carry out his fantasy. "I did not think he could."

When Tyler had suggested to Morris that by grabbing his victim from behind he could not be identified and therefore did not need to kill him, Morris reject-

ed the idea. "He said he wanted to look in their eyes," Tyler said. He claimed he had already fulfilled his own fantasies in the Philippines and had no desire to harm or kill anyone.

The court was earlier told that Daniel was abducted from a street near his home in Beckton, east London, taken to a flat by Morris and Tyler to be videoed while they bugged him and then murdered before being buried at Bradley Stoke, near Bristol. Tyler claims Morris strangled Daniel and that he played no part in killing him.

The case continues.



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Family life at last for English eagles

England's only breeding pair of golden eagles have hatched at least one chick after three unsuccessful years of trying, it was disclosed today.

The eagles are feeding at least one nestling at their remote Lake District eyrie in Cumbria, according to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), whose staff are keeping an anxious watch on them.

It will be some days before wardens can confirm the number of chicks, but golden eagles usually lay two eggs.

RSPB spokesman Chris Harbard said Scotland had an estimated 425 pairs of golden eagles but England has just the one couple, who are nesting within the Haweswater estate owned by North West Water.

They have failed to breed successfully for the last three years, he said. "We were beginning to worry that the adult male, who is getting on a little bit, may have become infertile and we didn't have a pair that was capable of breeding."

A round-the-clock guard on the birds' eyrie has been mounted by RSPB staff and a team of volunteer wardens since early this year. Egg thieves present an annual threat to the birds.

The next few weeks will be critical as the chicks remain vulnerable, said the RSPB. They will not be ready to fly until they are 11 weeks old.

Usually, only one youngster makes it out of the nest. The younger or smaller bird often dies, either through lack of food or as a victim of the dominant sibling.



Rare bird: The golden eagle

news

Opponent of women priests to be a bishop

ANDREW BROWN
Religious Affairs Correspondent

One of the leading opponents of women priests in the Church of England is to be made a bishop. The appointment of the Rev John Broadhurst as Bishop of Fulham will be officially announced today, when three vacancies in the diocese of London are filled.

Fr Broadhurst is the chairman of Forward in Faith, the main group opposed to women priests, and has been largely responsible for the group's development as a virtual church within the church, with its own structures in every diocese.

He has been appointed by the Bishop of London, Right Rev Richard Chartres, who has also appointed as Bishop of Stepney Canon John Sentamu, a former judge of the Ugandan High Court who fled from Idi Amin and retrained as a priest when he came to England.

Dr Sentamu will become the third black bishop in the Church of England, joining the Bishop of Rochester, Dr Michael Nazir-Ali and the Bishop of Croydon, the Right Rev Wilfred Woods.

Dr Sentamu is a strong supporter of women priests who is,

however, liked and trusted by traditionalists. He is an energetic evangelical who talks with a speed and passion that can leave his hearers bemused.

He once told the General Synod that the Church of England has "the engine of a lawnmower and the brakes of a juggernaut". As Bishop of Stepney, he will be well-placed for the further promotion which almost everyone believes he deserves. His two immediate predecessors have become bishops of Bath and Wells and of London.

The third new suffragan bishop to be announced is the Ven Michael Colclough, now personal assistant to the Bishop of London, who will become Bishop of Kensington.

Archdeacon Colclough is an "affirming Catholic", who is in favour of women priests and of Catholic symbolism and language. This makes him a member of the party loathed above all others by traditionalist Anglo-Catholics, such as Fr Broadhurst. "An affirming Catholic is someone who will do anything with a woman except take her to bed," according to the latest traditionalist joke.

The appointment of Fr Broadhurst suggests that the

mass movement of priests opposed to the ordination of women from the Church of England into the Catholic church may have passed its high point.

If he believes he can stay and fight for his views within the Church of England, many others will conclude he is right.

A forceful critic of the hierarchy, greatly liked for his honesty and salty language, Fr Broadhurst was the first synod member to put his name to a petition in favour of women bishops, whose creation is explicitly prevented by the legislation allowing women priests.

Although he does not believe in either, he has said it is hypocrisy and sexism to stop women from promotion if they are to be priests at all.

The three appointments represent a balance between the three main parties in the Church of England in London, which has both the highest number of women priests in the country and the highest number of irreconcilable opponents.

Although Bishop Chartres remains, like his wife, an opponent of women priests, he will be able to point out that his appointments today have given comfort to all sides.

Treasures from the attic evoke spirit of gracious living



A long-forgotten cache of antiques found in the locked attics of an Elizabethan country house in Sussex exceeded all expectations at auction yesterday, writes Marianne Macdonald.

More than 400 pieces of

silver, glass and furniture – as well as the dressing-up box pictured above – were snapped up in ferocious bidding during the two-day sale at Parham Park, Pulborough, with another 500 to go under the hammer today.

Such was the interest that before the end of yesterday's auction it had racked up sales of more than £777,000 – already more than the total expected to be achieved in both days of the sale.

The antiques stayed

wrapped in newspaper or buried in tea chests for decades. These include a collection of Walter Crane table linen, magnificent silver services and candelabra.

The most amazing price achieved was for a pair of

George II gilt-lined double spice boxes engraved with Royal monograms. Estimated at up to £10,000, they sold for £117,000.

The auction is aimed at securing the future of the house and gardens.

Photograph: Dillon Bryden

I love Oyston, model told the tycoon's assistant

A model who alleges that she was raped by the media tycoon Owen Oyston once said she loved him, a court was told yesterday.

The 62-year-old multimillionaire's former personal assistant, Gill Bridge, told Liverpool Crown Court the blonde teenage model had been his girlfriend, and would regularly share his hotel room during business trips to London.

Father-of-five Oyston denies raping the girl when she was 19 and raping and indecently assaulting another model, aged 16, in the bedroom of his country mansion, Cloughton Hall, near Lancaster.

Mrs Bridge – now managing director of Blackpool Football Club of which Oyston is chairman – said she first saw the girl at the Midland Hotel in Manchester, when she had been working for Oyston for a couple of months.

"He had obviously met her before because she put her arms around him and kissed him

on the cheek. She embraced him."

She confirmed taking telephone calls from her for Oyston at his offices, and that Oyston had girlfriends during the time she was one of his personal assistants.

"Obviously we tried to keep it as discreet as possible. I probably knew more than the other two because I was away on business with him more and saw him more on a social basis than the other girls did."

Mrs Bridge claimed the model would share Oyston's room on business trips to London's Royal Trafalgar and Park Lane Hilton hotels.

"She was quite flirtatious with him. He was perhaps a little more reserved. It was obvious that she was attracted to him."

She recalled on one visit someone asking her: "What do you see in a chap like Owen?" and claimed she had replied: "I love him."

Mrs Bridge confirmed to Mrs Helen Grindrod QC, pro-

secuting, that she was still employed by Oyston and was loyal to him. She denied she had ever been the model's friend.

Mrs Grindrod asked: "What you have done is to put a slant on the facts to show that she was having an affair with him?"

Mrs Bridge replied: "She was having an affair with him. She is putting a slant on my involvement because it suits her alibi."

Later, Christopher Cox, a labourer, told the court he had had a relationship with the model lasting for a couple of weeks, during which he made love to her twice in his bedroom at his parents' home.

He claimed he had been mistaken when he made his original statement alleging that this had happened in 1988 – before the alleged rape in 1989, when she claims to have been a virgin. He said he now realised that they had met in 1988 but had made love to each other in 1990.

The trial was adjourned until tomorrow.

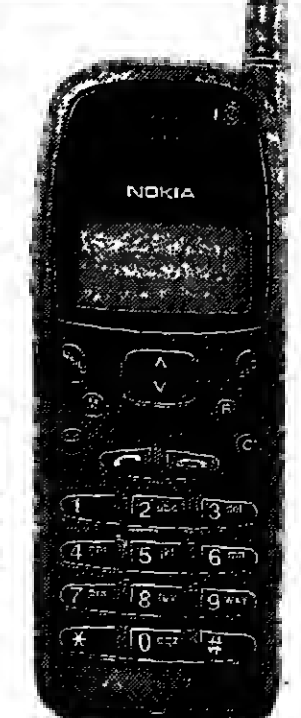
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than animals because an animal can roam when it is hungry.

September There is a big welt on my arm where I was whipped yesterday for falling asleep at the loom.

October The boss says we are behind on the carpet. We are too slow. So instead of starting at six we will start at four. And instead of stopping at eight we will stop at 11. Three boys are crying but I feel too tired to cry.

November A big commotion today. Nageshwar and his two younger brothers escaped.

December Nageshwar is back and we have been told that the same thing will happen to us if we try to escape. He has been branded with hot iron rods.

January I want to study. I want to be a teacher, and when I grow up I will earn money and help my father out of his debt. That's what I want to do, if I get out of here.

DIARY OF A SURVIVOR AGED 8½

February I don't know why I am here. I think my Papa sold me to the boss to learn a trade and now the boss says I must do exactly what he tells me.

March It's the same every day. We go from our beds to the loom at six. No-one must talk. We do tiny knots all day, the smallest ones on the carpet because we have small fingers. Work, work, work. My fingers crack and weep and sometimes my eyes get all blurred. We get a cup of dahl and half an hour to rest then go back to the loom till night time. There is no more food. We are too tired to play.

April Paro talked today and the boss lashed her with the cane. He shouted at us "if you children speak you are not giving your whole attention to the product."

May My fingers bled again and the boss got angry with me for getting blood on the loom. He says I will work extra hours for the next two days and I will be fined and that will increase my father's debt to him. I cried when he talked about Papa.

June The boy who lost a hand, poor Ranglal, he fainted today. We begged the boss to open the window. "The mud walls are hot sir. The thermometer says 105 sir." But the window stays shut to keep out the insects that eat the wool.

July Not much light gets through the polythene slats in the roof. It's hard to see the pattern. I made mistakes today and I'm frightened what will happen when the boss finds out.

August In bed tonight, Nageshwar told me his plan to escape. He is brave but he is bigger than me. He said we live worse

This diary is based on interviews with Madan Ram and other children recently working in carpet factories in Uttar Pradesh, India.

These children have been rehabilitated with the help of Christian Aid, but in India alone on estimated £5 million children still spend their entire childhoods slaving in bonded labour to help their parents out of debt.

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Reforms for life in care 'too little too late'

REBECCA FOWLER

The Government was accused of doing "too little too late" to reform Britain's children's homes yesterday, as plans emerged of a campaign to give them a more positive image.

The campaign will be launched officially next month as Children's Homes Week by John Bower, a health minister. It will focus on removing the stigma of growing up in care, and improving the status of workers in the homes.

According to the Department of Health, the campaign was inspired by the report into the running of Britain's children's homes four years ago by Norman Warner, former director of Kent Social Services. It followed the Leicestershire scandal in which Frank Beck was given five life sentences for sexual abuses in four homes.

But Mr Warner, who exposed the dismal status of homes and the lack of specialised training for workers, has criticised the Government for not backing the campaign with action, including following up more of the 83 recommendations he made in the report.

He said: "It's better late than never, but it's no good having a campaign unless you address the points we set out in that report. That includes improving the training arrangements for staff in residential care. Having a campaign without the substance of better training in my view is a waste of time."

Victims of the abusers

"I still think they should also have set up a watchdog body, as the report recommended. The problem is that this sector fades from recognition, and there needs to be a group guiding the Government into action. It is still a Cinderella service that everyone forgets about once the scandals die down."

The image of children's homes has been battered by a series of disturbing scandals, including the sexual and physical abuse of hundreds of children in care. An *Independent* campaign has highlighted loopholes in the system which has allowed paedophiles to target homes, and many workers have become demoralised by lack of pay and status.

Ministers are examining ways of making children in homes more secure by introducing a register of convicted paedophiles and creating a professional body with disciplinary powers to regulate people who work in children's homes.

The Department of Health denied yesterday that the campaign, which has the motto "just like you", was a window-dressing exercise, that detracted from its failure to respond to recommendations made in a series of reports following scan-

dals in homes. It will focus on the achievements of children who have succeeded in life, despite prejudice against them, from those who went into further education and started up their own businesses, to the more public triumphs of celebrities including Bruce Oldfield, the designer, Kris Akshusi, the athlete and Frank Bruno, the boxer.

Paul Rotherston, director of the National Leaving Care Advisory Service which is co-ordinating the campaign, said: "We're trying to say to young people you can come through care and make it. These are young people being left with a massive stigma and misunderstanding."



Puffin protest: Greenpeace's demonstration against industrial fishing yesterday

Photograph: Edward Sykes

Puffins blockade McVitie's

Around 150 Greenpeace activists dressed as penguins blocked the entrance to a biscuit factory yesterday in protest at the use of "industrial" fish oil in foods.

The demonstration, which launched a campaign against industrial fishing for sand eels in the North Sea, took place at McVitie's in Harlesden, north-west London. Greenpeace claimed that puffins' food supply was being threatened. A spokesman for the environmental organisation said McVitie's used around 6,000 tons of fish oil in their biscuits each year.

United Biscuits said last night: "United Biscuits is concerned about the depletion of fish stocks in the North Sea and other fisheries. We understand that industrial fishing is one of the main contributory factors... UB has committed to cease the use of fish oil from non-sustainable industrial fishing in European waters within one year and to work towards a position where all fish products are sourced from sustainable sources."

Bank makes bid for student loans

JUDITH JUDO
Education Editor

Students will be able to take out privatised loans for the first time from next October, ministers announced yesterday.

Barclays Bank and two other financial institutions have bid to become the first private institutions to offer student loans.

Their decision will come as a relief to the Government which said earlier this year that it was postponing the introduction of the scheme after the banks appeared unenthusiastic about taking part. They feared it would make them unpopular with student customers.

Critics said there would be a two-tier loan system, with the banks offering loans to students whose prospects were good and the Government's loan company catering for the rest.

Legislation to allow private institutions to offer loans was passed recently. The government-financed student loans company will continue to offer loans alongside the banks.

Barclays promised to speed up the loan-dispensing process but said applicants would have

to be Barclays customers. Allan Silverman, of Barclays, said: "Eligibility criteria, repayment terms and interest rates would be the same as for loans offered by the Student Loans Company, but funds would normally be available within five days of the bank receiving the completed application form - far quicker than at present."

Eric Forth, minister for higher education, said: "I very much welcome the decision of these financial institutions to tender. Our objective throughout has been to increase the loans choices available to students and the quality of service they receive." Barclays has held talks with the National Union of Students and modified its proposals accordingly. Douglas Trainer, the NUS president, said the union was opposed to the current loans scheme and to privatised loans operated under the current system. However, he welcomed the concessions Barclays had made to ensure that its proposals would offer students a better service.

Ministers now have to decide which tenders to accept. Up to four institutions can be selected.

Joan Thirkettle dies aged 48

Joan Thirkettle, one of ITN's most experienced news reporters, died in hospital on Saturday, ITN said.

Ms Thirkettle, 48, who had been suffering from cancer, covered more than 1,500 stories for ITN after joining as a reporter in 1974.

She reported on the famine in Ethiopia, Richard Branson's trans-oceanic balloon expedition, highlighted the artistic talent of autistic boy Stephen Wilshire and was a member of the ITN team which won a Royal Television Society award for the coverage of Labour leader John Smith's death.

Ms Thirkettle began her career in 1965 as a trainee researcher with Associated Rediffusion. She joined the *Daily*

Mail, and, in 1969, went to the *Sunday Times* as property correspondent and business writer.

From 1970 she reported for BBC radio and British Forces Broadcasting before becoming a founder member of London Broadcasting Company (LBC) in 1973. She joined ITN the following year and rapidly became a household face and name.

When not reporting, Ms Thirkettle wrote short stories and studied natural history, politics and foreign affairs. She was also an occasional presenter of music programmes on Classic FM radio.

Colleagues and friends paid tribute to Ms Thirkettle's "sheer professionalism and skill". "Joan's death is a great loss," ITN's chief executive Stewart Purvis said. "For more than 20 years she was part of the fabric of ITN, part of its history and part of its family. She covered a wide range of stories with determination, professionalism and great integrity."

Fellow ITN newswoman Julia Somerville said: "Among all her other great qualities she was also extremely kind-hearted."

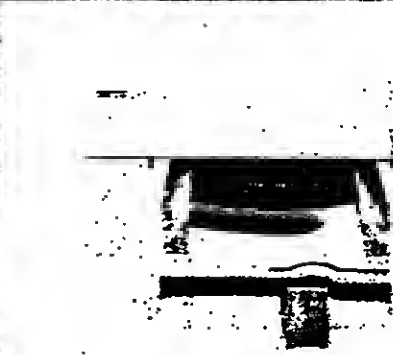
Richard Branson, Virgin Atlantic chairman, described her as "a great ambassador for ITN".

Ms Thirkettle was divorced and lived in London with her two children, Daisy, 18, and Michael, 15.



Joan Thirkettle: 'A great ambassador for ITN'

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Solar powered: A London-based Trinidadian healer 'soaking up the sun's energy' in Hyde Park yesterday. He claims he gave the former boxing champion Muhammad Ali, who suffers from Parkinson's disease, the strength to go jogging during his trip to Britain last year. Photograph: Chris Heigen

Gulf minefields expert 'given no safety clothing'

ROS WYNN-JONES

A mine disposal expert was blinded and lost a leg clearing mines following the Gulf war because he was sent to Kuwait with no protective clothing or equipment, the High Court was told yesterday.

Paul Jefferson, 39, was sent to Kuwait in 1991 by Royal Ordnance, a subsidiary of British Aerospace, to make safe minefields laid by retreating Iraqi forces. "What happened to me could have happened to anyone anywhere else [in the minefields]. We were sent to Kuwait without any equipment or protective clothing," he said.

He had taken a pair of goggles with him but had lent them

to another member of the team detonating mines in the Kuwaiti oil fields. Mr Jefferson alleged he was threatened by members of Royal Ordnance that, despite a lack of equipment, if he could not carry out the work he "could get on the next plane home". The unit was expected to "scavenge" for equipment left by retreating enemy forces.

He and three other members of the team were involved in a mission to establish whether certain types of Iraqi mines could be destroyed by burning them in June 1991, when he trod on a mine. Because the Ordnance disposal teams were not equipped with detonators to blow up mines the four men had gone to a mine dump on a Kuwaiti beach to "scavenge" for suitable equipment.

After a makeshift detonation process using a Coca-Cola can filled with petrol and failed, Mr Jefferson entered the mine dump to find something more suitable to set fire to the mines.

"Had he been wearing protective goggles he would have kept his sight," Andrew Hogarth, for the prosecution, said. "Had the right equipment been available Mr Jefferson would never have been in the dump where the mine went off."

William Norris QC, for the defence, said Mr Jefferson was a "cavalier operator" who kept mines under his bed in the

temporary building he stayed in while in Kuwait and did not always wear protective clothing even when it was available.

Mr Jefferson, a former Royal Engineer, replied that there were no other facilities for storage of mines that had been made safe and were needed for training purposes.

He added that a photograph of him standing in a "minefield" without safety goggles produced by the defence was actually a posed publicity photograph for a humanitarian organisation he had worked for in Afghanistan on "a perfectly safe piece of road".

The first aid kit given to the team consisted of "a few plasters and some aspirin", he told Mr Justice Henry Brooke.

He was in agony in the hours it took him to get to hospital with his foot blown off and shrapnel embedded in his face and eyes, the court heard. He now has an artificial leg and has never recovered his sight.

Royal Ordnance had won a £60m contract awarded by the Kuwaiti government to carry out the work which was concentrated on the nation's southern beaches and oil fields. More than 100 men were employed to clear minefields, of which eight men died and at least two others were injured, Mr Hogarth told the court.

The case continues.

Ex-Navy pilot wins ski injury damages

A Royal Navy helicopter pilot who pulled the Virgin tycoon Richard Branson from the sea after his ill-fated attempt to cross the Atlantic by balloon was yesterday awarded "very substantial" damages for a skiing accident which left him almost totally paralysed.

Trevor Jones, 35, was a member of the Navy skiing team when he was injured practising for the Navy skiing championships in Austria in 1988 - a few months after the sea rescue - because of what he claimed was negligence on the part of the Ministry of Defence in not making sure that a slalom run was safe.

Clive Wilcock-Smith QC, representing the former lieutenant, told Mr Justice Collins in the High Court that Mr Jones now needed 24-hour care but his dis-

abilities had not stopped "this very remarkable man" from returning to the sports he loves.

"He has approached his disability with the utmost courage and determination and what he has achieved is truly remarkable."

"He has flown a microlight, sailed a yacht and returned to the ski slope. Flying and sailing was his life and he was an accomplished sportsman both at school and in the Navy and what he has achieved since his accident testifies to his courage."

Mr Wilcock-Smith said that he had agreed terms with the Ministry of Defence on a 50-50 basis and asked for the case to be adjourned for the amounts to be worked out.

Mr Jones, who lives in Ful-

ham, south-west London, attended the court hearing using a computerised wheelchair.

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DAILY POEM

Tennessee June

By Jorie Graham

This is the heat that seeks the flaw in everything
and loves the flaw.
Nothing is heavier than its spirit,
nothing more landlocked than the body within it.
Its daylilies grow overnight, our lawns
bare, then falsely gay, then bare again. Imagine
your mind wandering without its logic,
your body the sides of a riverbed giving in ...
In it, no world can survive
having more than its neighbors;
in it, the pressure to become forever less is the pressure
to take forevermore
to get there. Oh

Let it touch you ...
The porch is sharply lit - little box of the body -
and the hammock swings out easily over its edge.
Beyond, the hot ferns bed, and fireflies gauze
this fat tobacco stuns,
the crickets boring holes into the heat the crickets fill.
Rock out into that dark and back to where
the blind moths circle, circle,
back and forth from the bone-white house to the creepers
unbraiding.

Nothing will catch you.
Nothing will let you go.
We call it blossoming -
the spirit breaks from you and you remain.

Jorie Graham has just won the 1996 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for her Selected Poems 1974-94, *The Dream of the Unified Field*, published in this country by Carcanet at £12.95. Over the last fifteen years, Graham has emerged as one of the most exciting and influential young poets in America. Compared with Emily Dickinson for the delicacy of her language and fierce sense of the philosophic universe, her preoccupations are entirely her own and 20th century: television, breakdancing, history viewed through a modern lens. Recommended.

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Albania's harsh regime given EU support

ANDREW GUMBEL
Tirana

Albania's President Sali Berisha may not be popular with international human rights groups, who have condemned his repressive attacks on the opposition, the judiciary and the independent press, and he is certainly mistrusted by many Albanians who feel he has turned the country into a giant clientelistic structure at the service of his Democratic Party. But in the run-up to this month's general elections he has enjoyed almost unqualified support from European Union countries, who have swept away scruples about interfering in the internal affairs of other countries and, in some cases, campaigned openly for the Democratic Party's return to office. According to the diplomatic community in Tirana, Germany and Italy have been particularly assiduous in their support. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation, which is linked to Chancellor Helmut Kohl's CDU, has given direct logistical advice to the Democratic Party and other centre-right groupings, and held seminars in which President Berisha has been offered tips for his electoral strategy. Nothing similar has been offered by other foundations to the Socialist-led opposition. A month ago, two senior politicians representing European conservatives, Alois Mock of the European Democratic Union and Klaus Welle of the European Christian Democrats, turned up at the Democratic Party's pre-electoral convention and praised Mr Berisha for keeping the peace in the southern Balkans. A few days later, Pierre Lellouche, an adviser to the French President, Jacques Chirac, was photographed hugging Mr Berisha and calling him the great hope for "democracy, freedom and tomorrow's prosperity". The President of the Council of the European Parliament, Leon Fischer, even went so far as to praise a much-contested law banning former collaborators with the communist-era secret service in Albania from seeking public office. The law has been widely criticised because it effectively gives the Democratic Party the power to ostracise its opponents without due judicial process, but Ms Fischer said flatteringly that she would be happy to see it in operation in her native Germany. Such remarks have been a major morale-booster for Mr Berisha, who has spent much of the election campaign painting himself as the man to take Albania into the European mainstream while denouncing his opponents, the Socialists, as unrepentant Communists planning to turn the clock back. What's more, Albanians depend on vast infusions of foreign aid and may be inclined to vote for the Democratic Party against their instincts if they feel that they will receive bigger handouts that way. Some of the interventions have raised serious ethical questions, and not just because of Mr Berisha's human rights record which most visitors have overlooked. The most recent visitor, the floor leader of President Chirac's RPR in the French Senate, Michel Pericard, actually broke Albanian law by supporting the Democratic Party once the official campaign had begun. Article 56 of the electoral law drawn up by President Berisha's government states that "election campaigning is prohibited by persons who are not Albanian citizens". Mr Pericard dismissed a challenge on this point as "amusing". Europe's support for Mr Berisha appears to be something of an unholy compromise. They are prepared to overlook his repressive tendencies (arguing that the Socialists may be no better once in power) and instead reward

him for staying out of the Yugoslav wars and for keeping a lid on ethnic tensions involving Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia. Furthermore, although there is tacit recognition that his economic policies are more clientelistic than genuinely free-market, the feeling is that Mr Berisha understands western interests in Albania and - after four years of halting starts and frustration - is beginning to open up the country to foreign investors. The problem with the Socialists is not so much that they would make life harder for foreign banks and businesses - although some embassies in Tirana feel they would - but that they might question the legality of projects now being initiated and provoke delays by replacing every last ministry official. Agencies providing billions of dollars in foreign aid feel the same way. "We have spent a long time trying to get things going and forming personal relationships with key people. This would be absolutely the worst time for a change of government, as we would have to start over from scratch," said one Italian worker on an EU project scheme. Such calculations are infuriating the opposition, which claims to be just as responsible on Balkan issues, just as open to Europe if not more so, and says it would do everything it could for a smooth transition after the elections. "It is a big mistake for foreign powers to judge us from the point of view of their interests. The real interest is the future of our democracy, which they should seek to develop, not destroy with their interference," said Paskal Milo of the centre-left Social Democrats. The United States, which provided overt financial and political support for Mr Berisha at the last elections in 1992, has

been slightly more even-handed this time. Washington believes the Socialists are indeed committed to peace in the Balkans, but may scare off foreign investors. It sees Mr Berisha as having greater influence over Albanians in Kosovo, but does not entirely trust him to keep control of his nationalistic sentiments about Greater Albania. But European and US diplomats all seem to be remarkably indulgent of Mr Berisha's leadership style, variously describing the disqualification of scores of opposition politicians hoping to run for office as "a human rights problem, not an electoral problem" and criticising some of his blocking tactics merely for being "crude and overt". "One wonders if they would speak the same language if the Socialists were in power," remarked one foreign ood-diplomatic official in Tirana. "Somehow, I doubt it."



Ripe for investment: A market in Korca, Albania. Western leaders believe President Berisha offers the best hope for growth. Photograph: Network

Provincial sex works wonders for satisfying mafia business desires

"Do you have a problem?" asked the pert young woman behind the counter. "Er, just looking, thanks," I said as I hovered through the orgasm creams and ejaculation delay sprays. This was not Soho, or even Moscow, where sex shops hardly raise eyebrows any longer. This was deeply provincial Ryazan, the centre of a farming region south-east of Moscow which sends potatoes and other produce to market in the Russian capital. The women of Ryazan are known for their loud voices. There is a Russian expression: "to shout like a Ryazan farmer's wife". But, until now, I had never made a mental connection between Ryazan and the erotic. Unless the sight of women carrying buckets from the well on yokes, still a fairly common feature of the Russian countryside, can be considered sexually arousing. Here though, in the middle of Ryazan old town, in the shadow of the 17th century Uspensky cathedral, was a little lilac-coloured house called Magazin Intim. Dr Sergei Grigoriev, a sex therapist, launched the venture last year to coincide with celebrations marking the 900th anniversary of the founding of Ryazan.

RYAZAN DAYS

A large plastic penis hung outside the shop. I do not usually frequent such establishments but you will understand that in this case I found it hard to resist the lure. "You'll have to talk to the doctor," said the pert young woman when she realised my problem was that I was short of a story. "He'll tell you everything you want to know." In the back office, Dr Grigoriev was playing with a Siamese kitten. He was enormously fat. The mind boggled at the idea of him... but we will not go into that. He seemed friendly. "We're here to help people," he said. "They're put off by the idea of going to hospital with their sexual problems. They find it easier to come to a shop. At first they pretend they are just looking. Then they start to speak about what's troubling them." The commonest problems are impotence and failure to experience orgasm. Dr Grigoriev said Russian living conditions were often to blame. "There is still a terrible housing crisis. Gummy is often listening through the wall. The men take to drink and the women give up hope."

Viktorovich, Director of the Production-Commercial Individual Private Enterprise "Sergei". It was a relief to walk out into the warm, spring sunshine. And then I saw an extraordinary sight. The police were holding up the traffic, as they did in Soviet times for the 23rd birthdays of Communist Party officials, to allow the passage of a convoy of buses and foreign-made cars. It was a mafia funeral. In a flash, I understood why earlier in the morning I had seen thugs with mobile phones and machine guns on the steps of my hotel. Now I realised they must have been preparing for the funeral. Later, I read all about it in the local paper. Four people had been wounded and citizen Sazonova, killed in a shoot-out at the Rus night club. Not only was there sex in Ryazan but violence too. I could not put my finger on it but, in an obscure way, I felt the sex and violence were related. Certainly this was a murky world I hardly expected to find in the Russian provinces. Moscow would seem a safe and innocent place after this.

Helen Womack

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Smoke screen: Firefighters douse the flames at the central post office, one of Bombay's oldest buildings, dating from the 19th century. No one was injured in the fire, which was caused by a short circuit. Photograph: Savita

Iron horses roar on to the Silk Road

HUGH POPE
Istanbul

The Great Game for oil, trade and power in Central Asia took a new turn away from Russia yesterday with the opening of a railway link that gives the first alternative rail route into the region from Iranian ports in the Gulf: from Turkish factories, from London or Peking.

Leaders of states like Iran and Turkey and the new countries of Central Asia flocked to an inaugural ceremony for the newly built 300-km Mashhad-Tehran connection at Sarakhs, a remote dust-blown outpost on the border between Turkmenistan and Iran.

Sarakhs was once a spot where British players of the old imperial Great Game against Moscow entered or left then-friendly Persian territory. Yesterday's opening is a symbol of the advantage that Iran, now

anti-Western, has gained in the new game that pits it not only against Russia but also Turkey, China, other regional states and Western oil and mining multinationals.

The opening will be followed by a gathering today of leaders of the Economic Cooperation Organization, which groups 250 million people in the non-Arab Middle East and Muslim south-west Asia. It is the descendant of the Baghdad Pact and other anti-Soviet alliances of the old "northern tier" but has gone in a different direction than was ever intended by its architects in Washington.

"We don't know quite what to do about the Sarakhs opening," said a US official in Central Asia. "On one hand, it is helping trade and stability in the new states. On the other, it is opening the way for Iran. I expect we'll be standing on the sidelines, wagging our finger,

but without much spirit." The US has backed its secular NATO ally, Turkey, against Iran in the region and although Turkish businessmen are becoming ever more successful throughout the region, Ankara has been sidelined by its own weakness and geo-political difficulties in routing oil pipelines through Turkey.

Whether Washington likes it or not, Iran has been doing better in Central Asia and the Caucasus in the past couple of years. It has dropped its emphasis on Islamic fundamentalism to pursue a more traditional Iranian foreign and trade policy which has, for instance, led it to form a closer relationship with Christian Armenia than with Shia Muslim Azerbaijan.

Iran enjoys natural geographical advantages. For those ready to deal with its bureaucracy, it offers a direct route to warm-water ports from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, by road, by a short voyage across the Caspian Sea, or now by rail.

On Saturday President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan signed an agreement with Iran that will allow 40,000 barrels a day of Kazakh oil exports through Iran, by means of "swaps" with Iranian oil in the Gulf for now and in the future by pipeline through Turkmenistan.

Iran also looks likely to take a 10-per-cent stake in an Azeri oil project to develop the Shakh-deniz field.

Western pressure had forced Baku to cancel a stake offered to Iran in the first BP-led consortium that will develop three fields further north.

"The Silk Road railway ... is the bridge for the region and the world and is a clear example of Iran's priority on regional co-operation," the Iranian President, Hojatoleslam Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, said at a ceremony in Sarakhs.

Former Soviet states around the Caspian also need to court Iran in their dispute with Russia over whether the Caspian is a lake, whose underground resources must be shared, or a sea, whose oilfields are the property of the state whose shoreline is closest.

Iran has so far backed Russia's attempt to force everyone to share natural resources under the "lake" definition. This

would help to re-establish Moscow's hegemony in the area and give it a say in the activities of Western oil companies.

Perhaps partly because Washington has tried so hard to freeze Iran out, Central Asian states have had little room for manoeuvre. Russia has reasserted a dominance built on two centuries of tsarist and Soviet rule of the Caucasus and a century in Central Asia. Georgia has given back basing rights to Russian troops and Armenia has signed dozens of joint military agreements. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan this month joined the customs union with Russia and Belarus.

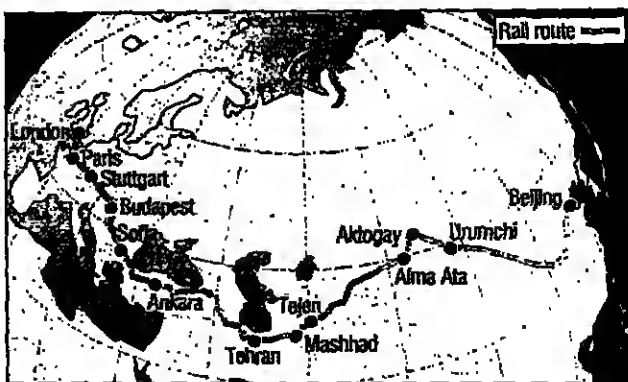
Moscow's blockade of Kazakhstan's oil exports has been resolved by an agreement to build the main Kazakh pipeline through Russia to the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk. Russia has been given a 25-per-cent stake and the Russian LUKoil conglomerate a 12.5-per-cent stake. Azerbaijan, which is still resisting taking back Russian troops, has also given a stake to LUKoil in its main BP-led consortium and has pledged to export half of its first flows of oil through Russia to the Black Sea.

The other half is to go to the Black Sea through Georgia. But Turkey's new government has withdrawn an offer to finance the pipeline, upset that the consortium had not agreed to its conditions and still hoping a pipeline can be built to the Mediterranean across Turkey. Ankara has also reiterated warnings that it will prevent large amounts of oil from Russia's Black Sea ports using the Bosphorus, where tankers pass within metres of parts of Istanbul, with its millions of people. As yet, however, little new oil or gas is being exported from anywhere.

And in the meantime it is often Turkish entrepreneurs who are opening up businesses all over the Caucasus and Central Asia, from bakeries and restaurants to banks, bottling plants, bus and truck-making factories and textile mills.

These are often done with Western partners. In fact, virtually all projects belong exclusively to any one country.

And it is entirely typical that one of the pioneers exporting oil from Central Asia by ship and rail through Iran was actually a Turk.



Hopes rise for talks with N Korea

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
Tokyo

South Korea, the United States and Japan will emerge today from a two-day conference aimed at setting up talks with communist North Korea, in an atmosphere of cautious optimism about the prospects for peace on the peninsula.

The meeting, on the South Korean island of Cheju, is the latest in a series of diplomatic initiatives designed to defuse tension between Seoul and Pyongyang since a tense interlude last month, when troops from the communist North illegally entered the demilitarised zone between the two countries. Its focus has been a proposal, made last month by President Bill Clinton and the South Korean President, Kim Young-sam, for peace talks between the two Koreas, plus the US and China - the four signatories of the Korean Armistice, which brought an uneasy end to the Korean War in 1953.

Ever since then, the two sides have faced one another off across the heavily armed demilitarised zone. All attempts at dialogue between the two Koreas have failed. The North has taken to insisting that it will talk peace with the US alone, but the thought of being left out of any treaty terrifies Seoul, even more than the possibility of a last ditch attack by a desperate North Korean military.

Since the Clinton-Kim proposal, however, the atmosphere has warmed. While it has not yet formally responded to the idea of the four-way talks, Pyongyang has asked for more details on the

proposal, and desisted from further provocations on the border. China has been cautiously positive and the South Koreans seem to be overcoming their fear of being sidelined.

Freed of domestic political pressures by its success in recent elections, the government has decided to give the North Korean situation the serious diplomatic attention it requires.

Three days ago, the US ambassador to Seoul, James Laney, delivered a striking speech which recast 43 years of US-South Korean policy on the peninsula. "In the absence of other tools with which to change its circumstances, the North may look for other ways of using the only remaining asset which commands international respect - military might," he told a conference in Seoul. "We should tone down our rhetoric and lurid language [and] realise that they are driven not by arrogance but by insecurity ... Everyone's interests are served by economic assistance to the North, reduction of tensions, and comprehensive North-South engagement."

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Brief respite for Liberian exiles

VINCENT TSAS
Reuters

Takoradi — Thousands of Liberian war refugees, many sick after a week at sea, were brought ashore from a crippled freighter yesterday and put in heavily guarded quayside tents at this Ghanaian port, witnesses said. "They have all been brought down and kept in tents which were erected on the quay yesterday. The military are everywhere," said a witness. Nearly 4,000 passengers fleeing violence and anarchy in Monrovia, Liberia's capital, are

unwanted by the country's neighbours who say they are fed up with its six-year-old civil war and refugee problem. The refugees' respite ashore is likely to be only temporary — just long enough for repairs to be carried out to the vessel. As the passengers, including hundreds of women and children, left the rusting Nigerian freighter *Bulk Challenger*, Ghana made clear in a statement that it was sticking to its decision not to admit the refugees. It cited the need to avoid undermining decisions taken last week on halting renewed civil

war in Liberia by the Economic Community of West African States (Ecomog) of which Ghana holds the rotating presidency. "Care must be taken in order not to create a panic situation in Monrovia which will unduly generate more exodus of Liberians into neighbouring countries which are already saddled with thousands of Liberian refugees," the Foreign Ministry statement said. "The vessel which is anchored just outside the harbour will be expected to set sail for Monrovia or wherever the cap-

tain would decide," it added. Ivory Coast, saying hundreds of the passengers were Liberian gunmen, forced the *Bulk Challenger* back to sea last Thursday after emergency repairs. Sierra Leone has blocked another vessel, the fishing boat *Victory Reef*, with 700 refugees off Freetown. There were also signs yesterday of international anger at the treatment of the Liberian refugees, particularly the freighter passengers — many of them sick, suffering diarrhoea and packed together on board with only one toilet.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, pleaded: "Unless the door is open to them, a lot of people, many of them women and children, may die." She said the UNHCR was prepared to help countries that grant asylum to the Liberians. Emma Bonino, the European Union's humanitarian affairs commissioner, said: "I am deeply shocked at the sight of thousands of helpless and hopeless civilians who are being sent from one port to another, and denied the right to proper refuge and assistance."

The commission said its European Community Humanitarian Office would provide emergency assistance to refugees and money for the few aid agencies still operating in Liberia. It did not say how much it would give. A witness said more than 200 soldiers of the African Ecomog peace-keeping force stationed in Liberia were among the passengers. In Monrovia, Ecomog chief of staff, Brigadier-Gabriel Anyankpele, confirmed that soldiers were on board and the shooting incident on Sunday in which two passengers died.

IN BRIEF

Mandela announces new cabinet jobs

Cape Town — President Nelson Mandela yesterday appointed new ministers to fill the gaps in the South African cabinet created by the withdrawal of the white-led National Party. He said that he had decided to merge the Ministries of Agriculture and Land Affairs and that the new ministry would be headed by Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom. Deputy Minister of Welfare and Population Development, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, is promoted to minister. Mohammed Valli Moosa takes over from Rolf Meyer as Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development Minister. Deputy Minister of Home Affairs Penuell Maduna becomes Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs, replacing P. Botha. P. Jordan, ousted as Posts and Telecommunications Minister last month, returns to the cabinet to replace Dawie de Villiers as Environmental Affairs and Tourism Minister. **Reuters**

Chinese leader calls for help to Africa

Addis Ababa — Chinese President Jiang Zemin appealed to wealthy nations to lighten Africa's \$31.3bn (£20.3bn) foreign-debt load, saying it was impeding development on the world's poorest continent. Jiang made the call in Ethiopia in a keynote speech on China's Africa policy before leaving for Egypt on the third leg of a six-nation African tour. His visit, the first to Africa by a Chinese leader, is seen partly as a response to Taiwan's diplomatic forays on the continent. **Reuters**

Croatia's rights record worries West

Strasbourg — The Council of Europe may delay Croatia's accession this week out of concern over recent decisions on civil liberties by President Franjo Tudjman, a source close to the secretary-general said. The source said concern focused on Tudjman's decisions to dissolve the democratically-elected Zagreb city council, dominated by the opposition, and on the prosecution of several independent newspapers. **Reuters**

French rail gives gay couples equality

Paris — Homosexual couples can now get cheap seats on French trains — provided their local town hall certifies they live together, the state railway company SNCF said. A spokeswoman said SNCF had extended to homosexual couples the 25 per cent fare cut previously granted to heterosexual couples. **Reuters**

Greenpeace makes an eastern foray

Geneva — Greenpeace announced it would be sending its peace ship the *MS Greenpeace* to China next month to protest against Chinese plans to conduct nuclear weapons tests. The environmental group said the vessel would visit Sydney and Manila before arriving off the coast of Shanghai in early June where it would remain for three to four days. It was the first time a Greenpeace boat had ever been sent to the communist country, it said. **AP**

Indian left may bid for power

New Delhi — India's main communist party agreed to consider leading a bid for power after its socialist partners unanimously asked Marxist veteran Jyoti Basu to be their prime ministerial candidate. A meeting of the National Front-Left Front urged Basu to consider the role barely hours after his Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) ruled out any role in a new government. **Reuters**

Israeli shot dead in West Bank

Jerusalem — Palestinian guerrillas shot dead an Israeli in the West Bank. The Arab gunmen fired first at an Israeli bus near the settlement of Beit El, north of Jerusalem, but no one was hit. An Israeli in charge of security in settlements in the area said. The gunmen then drove on and shot towards a group of young Jewish men standing along the road, severely wounding two of them. Israel Radio said one of the men was hit in the head and later died of his wounds. **Reuters**

Search for jet hampered by black swamp

PHIL DAVISON
Miami

While sharpshooters peered through the scopes of automatic rifles looking for alligators, police divers waded up to their shoulders in greasy black water, bending their helmets into the mud and groping with their hands after each step forward. There were 30 of them, like spearmen, advancing painstakingly in lines of five, looking for bodies, or more likely body parts, from a crashed cut-price airliner sucked into the famed Everglades swamp on Saturday with 109 people on board. "This is tough stuff out there," said Robert Francis, vice-chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), which has taken over the rescue operation. The police divers were joined yesterday by US Navy underwater experts with "pinger" sonar equipment they hoped would locate signals from the plane's flight recorders. After cutting through razor-sharp, 8ft sawgrass on so-called airboats — fan-propelled platforms driven by so-called "swamp rats" who usually fish the swamps or ferry tourists — the rescuers found the plane's engines and parts of its pale blue tailplane on Sunday evening.

But there appeared to be little else. Mr Francis said it was the most difficult rescue his experts had ever faced. Some rescuers said yesterday they had touched — poking with poles — a large, sunken piece of debris which could be part of the fuselage. But the problem was how to get it out of sinking swamps 300 yards from the nearest levee and reachable only by the grass-cutting airboats. Rescuers began talking of weeks, rather than days. US Navy underwater experts arrived yesterday to probe the murky water, where divers said they could not even see their hands in front of them. The divers also expressed fears that deadly 12-foot alligators which inhabit the area, but would have fled the spill fuel on Saturday, may return, attracted by the bodies. It was an eerie, surreal sight, with the whirl of helicopter blades, the boating, the chatter of confused birds and the buzz of local "deertflies" and mosquitos sporadically interrupting otherwise total silence. The swamp seemed to have literally swallowed up the entire aircraft into its sawgrass cover, 20ft layer of mud, soggy peat and limestone base. Only a slightly darker



Rescuers comb the Florida swamp in search of bodies and aircraft parts yesterday

Photograph: Hans Deryk/AP

shading, perhaps from aviation fuel but looking as though the site was under a small cloud, gave a hint as to where the plane sank. By yesterday, the area looked like a flooded golf course as rescuers planted orange flags to mark the path of their probe. Some rescue workers were seen carrying a few military-style body bags from the swamp to

coroners' vans on a nearby sand-and-stone levee, or causeway. The bags were clearly not empty but nor did they appear to weigh enough to carry entire bodies. Local officials looking on from a distance said the bags may have contained body parts, personal effects or "sensitive debris," which may be able to cast light on Saturday's crash of the ValuJet airline DC-9. It went

down eight minutes after taking off from Miami International Airport to Atlanta, Georgia, as 35-year-old woman pilot, Candelyn Kubeck, attempted to return to the airport because of black smoke in the plane. The British vice-consul in Orlando, Florida, Linda Nassar, said she was trying to confirm reports of up to three Britons on board, named as Roger and

Devlin Loughney and James Alloway, the latter believed to have been a Miami resident. The first two may have been wrongly listed as Britons because they had arrived from the UK before buying "walk-up" tickets to Atlanta, she said. ValuJet said it had contacted all next-of-kin but the British vice-consul said the airline had not yet passed on details.

Menem blasts cat-eating film

Buenos Aires (Reuters) — President Carlos Menem yesterday denounced journalists who filmed starving slum dwellers eating cats as "traitors", saying they had besmirched Argentina's international image. "They are real traitors. How can they be so irresponsible as to put those kinds of images that damage the country on all the television networks around the world?" Mr Menem asked. Footage of poor families skinning, gutting and cooking

cats in Argentina's second biggest city, Rosario, last week stunned a nation which is rich in exports of beef and grain, and sparked criticism of government neglect. Mr Menem said on local radio that the reports were a "disgrace" and claimed that the media had paid the poor to grill the animals. Last week, after Rosario's mayor, Hermes Binner, made similar accusations, a leading commentator, Mariano Gron-

dona, invited residents of the Rosario slum to his live television programme, which is one of the most widely watched in Argentina, where they insisted that they eat cats for nourishment and not for money. The images were shot in the slums surrounding Rosario, 185 miles (300 km) north of Buenos Aires. Industries have shrivelled in the town in recent years and the jobless rate has jumped to 21 per cent compared to a national rate of 16 per cent.

Mayor Barry is reunited with God

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

After a two-week provincial tour, the Marion Barry show came home yesterday. Saying that "God chose me, God working through the people put me in the mayor's office," Mr Barry was back in Washington, pronouncing himself drug free, drink free and now cigarette free, ready to take back the helm of hapless Washington DC. This ended, with a public address that better belonged at a Southern Baptist revival meeting than a gathering of senior administrative aides, an impromptu break that led to fevered speculation that after some 16 years, one of the country's most controversial elected officials might be about to step down. But nothing of the sort. The search for "spiritual and physical renewal" had succeeded, the mayor proclaimed. At retreats first on the Maryland shore and then in St Louis, he had "met every goal," was "spiritually reconnected with God." The performance was quintessential Barry. The mood was that of special blend of apology, redemption and celebration, and his reception was little short of ecstatic. "Our leader is a visionary, who can encourage others," exulted Michael Rogers, a city administrator. Mr Barry himself filled the air with promises. He was more determined than ever "to bring hope to where hope has been lost." But words alone will not restore the city's faith. Contrary to rumour, Mr Barry denied he had slipped back into alcoholism, or the drug use which led in 1990 to his arrest on crack cocaine charges and subsequent six-month jail term. But only last week, contracting powers of the DC Department of Human Services were taken from the mayor's hands. While the immediate threat of bankruptcy has receded, within months the city will again have to borrow massively. And its infrastructure continues to crumble. Spring is here, and foot-deep potholes still stud

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12 obituaries / gazette

Serge Chermayeff

Serge Chermayeff was an architect, designer and thinker, one of the last surviving creators of 1930s Modernism in England. During that period he acted with energy and enterprise to demonstrate the invigorating possibilities of synthesising art and science. As a teacher in America in the second half of his life, he affirmed his delight in the world of pure ideas, often putting them to use as offensive weapons.

Chermayeff's route to architecture was unconventional. He was born Sergius Ivaonovich Issakovitch at Grozny, in what is now Chechnya. His Jewish ancestors, according to family legend, had migrated from Spain to introduce new breeding stock into the cattle herds of Prince Kropotkin, soon after the Napoleonic wars. Instead of returning they were given land in the south and bred horses until the oil beneath the land earned them a sudden fortune.

They were a close-knit and cultivated family and they chose to educate Serge in England, at a preparatory school from the age of 10 and afterwards at Harrow. He learnt drawing in England under the liberal aegis of the Royal Drawing Society.

The Russian Revolution removed the family fortune although his parents managed to escape to Berlin after the First World War. Serge had a place at Trinity College, Cambridge, but after a brief spell as an interpreter to the British forces in Murransk he began a career as a journalist covering new dance crazes, in which he participated and won several international competitions. He was tall and physically impressive, with a large head and hands. He spent a year in Argentina, where he was a partner in a dance hall in Buenos Aires and earned his passage back escorting the horse of an Harrovian friend. In 1924, after his father's death, he

assumed the name of Chermayeff and began work with an interior design firm specialising in period interiors, designing stage sets in his spare time.

The emergence of the Modernist Chermayeff took place in the middle years of the 1920s with periods of study and travel abroad. In 1928 he married Barbara Maitland May, whom he had met at a tennis party in Sussex, and became a British citizen. Her energy matched his and they remained an inseparable team. He joined Waring and Gillow to develop the Modern Design Studio, a personal scheme of Lord Waring in which the Parisian designer Paul Follot was also involved. The bare simplicity of continental modern rooms was still unpalatable to English taste, as was the flashier side of Art Deco, but Chermayeff tackled the problem of a Modernism for England and produced rooms which were harmonious and

quietly comfortable with veneered furniture, abstract rugs and careful layout. His own house interiors at 52 Abbey Road of 1930 were at the leading edge of English design, and in the same year his interiors for the Cambridge Theatre, with golden arches concealing the auditorium lightings, went beyond Art Deco towards a systematic analysis of the audience's psychological needs.

The onset of the Depression broke Lord Waring, and Chermayeff launched his own practice as an "interior architect". He set up Plan Ltd to market modern furniture and other equipment, striving for Bauhaus values of anonymity combined with comfort. His steel-framed chairs had sprung seats and wooden armrests. With Wells Coates and Raymond McGrath, both unconventional figures on the design scene, he designed interiors for Broadcasting House, opened in 1932. At the same time he schemed for the new world of design, founding the 20th Century Group and joining Theodore Wiedewide, Eric Gill, Paul Hindemith and Amedeo Ozenfant in launching the abortive Académie Européenne Méditerranéenne. Chermayeff's awareness of art, science and politics grew with his friendship with Gill, J.D. Bernal, Julian Huxley and John Piper, whose abstracts of the 1930s influenced his own considerable work as a painter in later years. He appeared on radio and later on early television. Paul Nash wrote in 1932 that Chermayeff "... has probably done more to bring about a change of taste than any designer in England today".

In 1933 Chermayeff displayed a Weekend House at the Dorland Hall, a prototype for a low-rise system complete with Plan furniture, transferring and enlarging the display over the following winter at Whiteleys. He completed his first building, a small flat-roofed house in Rugby, and became a Fellow of

the RIBA. This was just in time for Chermayeff to offer a partnership to Erich Mendelsohn, one of the distinguished émigrés from Nazi Germany and a friend of several years standing. They installed their office on the top floor of the Pantheon, Oxford Street. Their combined talents won the competition for the De La Warr Pavilion at Bexhill in 1934, and when opened a year later it was the first major modern public building in Britain, technically innovative with its welded steel frame and finely finished interiors, expressive of seaside democracy. Chermayeff commissioned a mural from Edward Wadsworth to improve the spatial quality of the restaurant. Mendelsohn and Chermayeff built houses at Chalfont St Giles and Old Church Street, Chelsea which are subtle and mature in their genre. Their office operated as two separate teams, and Chermayeff's contribution may have been undervalued, particularly since Mendelsohn spent long periods working in Palestine. He devised grand schemes for housing and hotels which remained unbuilt but introduced Chermayeff to a larger scale of thinking. After the dissolution of the partnership in 1936 Chermayeff completed three major buildings: the Gilbey Offices in Camden Town, an urban corner block with special sound-proofing measures, the ICI Laboratories at Blackley, Manchester and his own house at Bentley Wood, Halland, East Sussex. The latter was a timber-frame structure in Jarrah wood with cedar cladding, poised in the landscape on a brick plinth. It was treated as a research laboratory for domestic design and servicing but never ceased to be a work of art which, with Henry Moore's fine *Reclining Figure* (now in the Tate) on its pedestal at the end of the terrace, summarised ten years of searching for an English Modernism in architecture.

The Chermayeffs, now with two sons, had little time to enjoy Bentley Wood. They moved in 1938 and soon after the outbreak of war they sold up and left unwillingly for the United States since Serge could find no work of national importance despite his efforts to enlist. Their belongings were auctioned to friends or put in store, later to suffer bomb damage. Serge and Barbara set off for the west coast in a Ford convertible to seek their fortune. Conditions for practice were not easy, and although Chermayeff built two interesting small houses in the Bay Area of San Francisco he turned to lecturing and in 1942 was appointed chairman of the Department of Art at Brooklyn College, where he remodelled the programme to make it responsive to social needs in design. Chermayeff's advocacy for Britain's war effort and the radicalism of his teaching were frowned on in high places and put him at a disadvantage, but he succeeded Lázlo Moholy-Nagy as president of the Chicago Institute of Design in 1946, where he again transformed the course, introducing architecture in the context of "Environmental Design" which he saw as the total scope of architecture, design and planning. In the same year he became an American citizen.



Chermayeff: tall and impressive, with a large head and hands

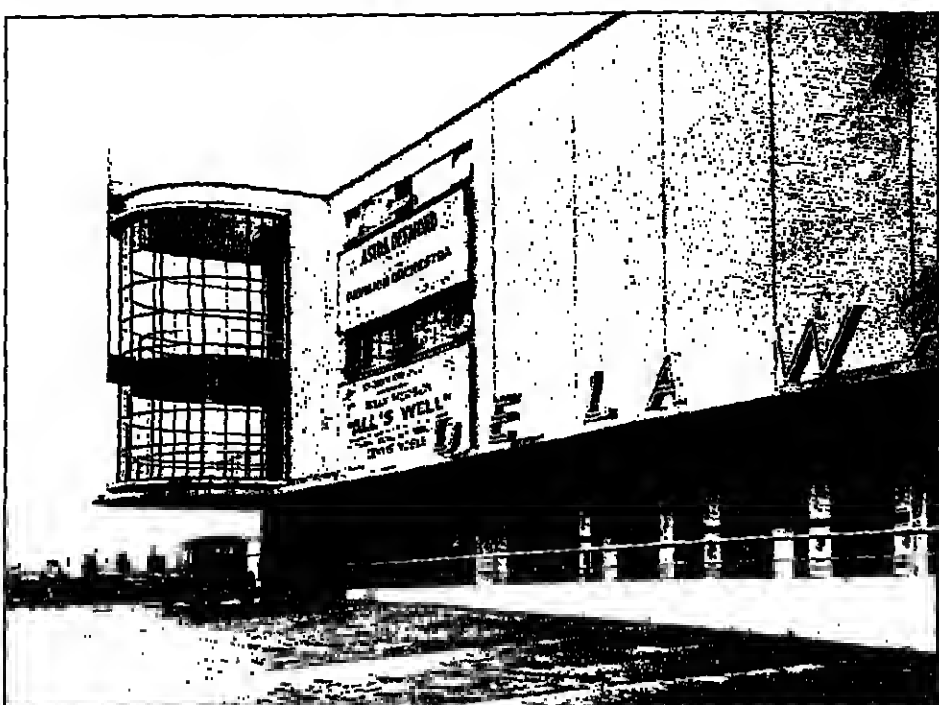
demonstration of the book's idea which can be traced back to his early career as a designer. A further book, *The Shape of Community* (with Alexander Tzonis) was published in 1971, two years after Chermayeff's retirement as Professor Emeritus. Briefly among the Yale students were Sir Richard Rogers and Sir Norman Foster.

During the 1970s Chermayeff became depressed by the condition of the world. He withdrew increasingly from public life, and on his final visit to London in 1980 told the Society of Industrial Artists and Designers: "Man faces the options of survival or catastrophe. Time is running out." Having earned a reputation for a ferocious temper, Chermayeff endured old age, deafness and Post-modernism with stoicism and a liberal flow of dry Marxisms at his summer cottage at

Wellfleet, Cape Cod which became his main residence after 1972, producing sheaves of abstract drawings in felt pen. His principal archive of papers was deposited at the Avery Library, Columbia University and forms the basis for the book *Design and the Public Good*, published in 1982. His drawings, of which unhappily few pre-war examples survive, were divided between Columbia and the RIBA Drawings Collection in London. He was proud of the achievements of his sons. Peter as an architect and Ivan as a graphic designer, but did not actively cultivate his own reputation which remains to be fully assessed.

Alan Powers

Sergius Ivaonovich Issakovitch (Serge Chermayeff), architect; born Grozny 8 October 1900; married 1928 Barbara Maitland May (two sons); died Wellfleet, Massachusetts 8 May 1996.



Seaside democracy: De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill, 1935

Photograph: The Architectural Press

Dr John Lawrence

The northern industrial town of Leigh and the sprawling rural idyll of Wensleydale are irrevocably joined in the minds of a whole generation of rheumatologists internationally. It was in these two diverse locations in the 1950s and 1960s that John Lawrence undertook his unique intensive surveys of the local populations to understand the frequency of occurrence and causes of the major types of arthritis.

Scores of residents willingly allowed Lawrence to question them in depth and systematically examine their joints, literally from head to toe. They also agreed to give a sample of blood and be comprehensively X-rayed whether or not they had any joint pains. The data from these surveys, analysed by hand, altered our understanding of the frequency and origins of the different forms of arthritis. Anxieties about radiation exposure and changing attitudes to public participation in research mean that such studies will never be repeated.

It was Lawrence's chief, Professor J.H. Kellgren, who had the vision to initiate this work. Kellgren, the first professor of rheumatology in the United Kingdom, provided the leadership and support which, with Lawrence's patient attention to detail, made them a formidable partnership. Their initial surveys were of osteoarthritis in coal miners in the late 1940s. Subsequently, in 1954, Kellgren successfully established the Field Survey Unit at Manchester University, funded by the Empire Rheumatism Council (now the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council). Lawrence, then a lecturer in occupational health, was the obvious choice to be its first Director. This unit is still in existence over 40 years later, an almost unique achievement in any area of

epidemiology (the study of how diseases occur in populations). Kellgren and Lawrence's early radiographic surveys showed, for the first time, how common osteoarthritis (the degenerative arthritis of ageing) was, with few individuals escaping. They realised that reading X-rays was subjective, resulting in differences in interpretation between even experienced viewers. It was therefore necessary to standardise the reading of X-rays for the presence and grading of arthritis. Kellgren and Lawrence therefore produced an *Atlas of Standard Radiographs* (1963), which remains the only internationally agreed scheme in common use. An investigator presenting data at an international meeting today is still likely to be asked whether



Lawrence: epidemiology

the patients' X-rays studied satisfy "K&L grade 2 or 3". Based on studies in the 1950s and early 1960s, Lawrence also demonstrated the link between osteoarthritis and obesity, with a clear gradient of increasing risk of arthritis of weight-bearing joints, particularly the knee, with increasing weight. Mechanically this association made sense. It did, however, emphasise that osteoarthritis was not a consequence of ageing and was, potentially at least,

modifiable by an alteration in lifestyle. The problem is that neither Lawrence nor his successors have succeeded in changing public behaviour.

Lawrence's principal fascination was with genetics. His work on genetics was not based on DNA and molecular biology but on the careful clinical study of affected individuals and their families. He compared the characteristics of such families with those he had observed in the general population and calculated what he believed to be the genetic contribution to arthritis risk. His pioneering work comparing the occurrence of arthritis in the co-twin of affected identical and non-identical twins was a landmark in this respect. It was this work that Lawrence chose to highlight in his 1969 Heberden Oration, entitled "Rheumatoid Arthritis: Nature or Nurture?" This annual lecture is probably the most prestigious award in UK rheumatology and the award to Lawrence, a man with no established academic title, was a mark of the respect in which he was held. His studies and reputation spread far outside the UK, and he trained many distinguished overseas investigators. His studies were enhanced by employing identical methods to further compare the occurrence of arthritis in northern England, with that for example in Jamaica or in a native American Indian population.

In 1977 his famous monograph *Rheumatism in Populations* was published, encapsulating his lifetime's contribution. This volume is a treasure trove of tables, graphs and charts for the serious student. Never a best-seller and not always easy to follow, it remains a unique collection of data to be cherished and exploited. Lawrence resigned from the Directorship of the Field Sur-

vey Unit in 1968 but continued with his studies almost until he died. He was a regular visitor to the unit, pulling out an X-ray or a patient record. He maintained contact with many of his study subjects, collecting further information over the years, and continued to submit scientific communications of his findings. His hand of "shoe leather" epidemiology, with the investigator knocking on doors and painstakingly collecting his own data, has been supplanted by postal questionnaires, telephone interviews and clinic visits to a research nurse. His duplicated survey sheets have been superseded by computer-generated data capture forms appropriate for optical scanning, and his hand-calculated simple tabulations replaced by complex statistical models. Despite this Lawrence's work has survived and is still regularly quoted, an achievement in an era where results can be out of date even within a year.

Sadly in his latter years, Lawrence developed Parkinsonism that caused increasingly serious incapacity. His regular attendances up to two to three years ago at the convivial biannual North West Rheumatology Club ceased and his contribution was missed. He was cared for in his latter years by his second wife, Inge, who also supported his continuing scientific activities. He was a quiet gentle man most at ease reading a pile of X-rays or interpreting some columns of figures. The results of his labours will continue to inform those seriously interested in the discipline well into the next century.

Alan Silman

John Stewart Lawrence, epidemiologist; born Brechin, 24 May 1908; married 1933 Ethel Clarke (two daughters; marriage dissolved); 1973 Inge Wright; died Eccles 6 May 1996.

Joan Thirkettle



Thirkettle: a general reporter with a whole range of specialisms

Good general news reporters will tell you they've got a tougher job than the Political Editors, the foreign correspondents and the other high-profile journalists. They are the people who come into the office often not knowing what story they will cover that day and then, when assigned to a story, have to make themselves instant experts.

That is how Joan Thirkettle made herself an expert in so many subjects after so many assignments over so many years. In the process she became friends with many of the people she reported about - from High Court judges to pop stars.

Her first job in television was in 1965 as a trainee researcher at London's first commercial television station, Associated Rediffusion, where she worked on the most influential pop music programme of the era - *Ready, Steady, Go*.

It was there that she first met a young record plugger, Richard Branson. Later, as an ITN reporter, she was to cover his transatlantic balloon and speedboat challenges and also the development of his business career through Virgin Atlantic and Virgin Cola.

Thirkettle's journalistic career after *Ready, Steady, Go* included spells on the *Daily Mail*, the *Sunday Times*, BBC Radio and British Forces Broadcasting, before joining the London Broadcasting Company (LBC) in 1973. The early days of LBC are a source of extraordinary legends in broadcasting and, amidst the shambles of the launch, a remarkable range of

talented people got their first hands-on broadcasting experience - Jon Snow and Carol Barnes were, like Thirkettle, to graduate from there to ITN.

Thirkettle joined ITN in 1974 as a reporter at a time when women reporters were not scarce on the screen but it was still unusual to see them on the sharp-edged hard news stories of the day.

Over the next 22 years she covered over 1,500 news stories for ITN. She reported on the famine in Ethiopia, highlighted the artistic talent of the autistic boy Stephen Wiltshire, and was a member of the ITN team which won a Royal Television Society award for coverage of the Labour leader John Smith's death. In recent years she had tended to specialise in legal stories such as the appeal made by the Birmingham Six.

Perhaps the abiding memory of the 1970s? Stuart Christie was acquitted of all charges relating to the activities of the Angry Brigade and Mr Meltzer was never considered a suspect by the police. We apologise for any imputation to the contrary.

Admir Menezes, football player, died Rio de Janeiro 11 May, aged 74. Member of the 1950 Brazilian World Cup team, which lost in the final to Uruguay. In 41 games for Brazil, he scored 35 goals, nine of them in World Cup matches. Maria Dolores de Borbón y Orleans, died Madrid 11 May, aged 87. Princess of the Two Sicilies and aunt of King Juan Carlos of Spain.

Joan Thirkettle, news reporter; born 14 September 1947; married Jonathan Wallace (one son, one daughter, marriage dissolved); died London 11 May 1996.

and foreign affairs. She was also an occasional presenter of music programmes on the radio station Classic FM. One of the great joys of her days off was to walk from her home in her beloved Gloucester Crescent, Camden Town, in north London, where she lived with her two children, Daisy and Michael, to Classic FM, just a few hundred yards away.

To fellow residents of Gloucester Crescent, who included Alan Bennett and Jonathan Miller, she was something of a community activist. She once told me when I was thinking of moving to the street that I would have to take my turn reading a lesson at the local church.

Her circle of friends went much wider than industry colleagues or local residents. It covered a whole host of people she'd met while reporting the news. She won their friendship and respect as somebody who cared strongly, very strongly, about her job but also about the people who got caught up in the news.

She will be missed by them and by the viewers to whom Joan Thirkettle had become just as much a part of their daily lives as the more famous newscasters of the day. For more than 20 years she was part of the fabric of ITN, part of its history and part of its family.

Stewart Parvis

Joan Thirkettle, news reporter; born 14 September 1947; married Jonathan Wallace (one son, one daughter, marriage dissolved); died London 11 May 1996.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

SUTHER-JONES: On 12 May 1996, to Helen (nee Suther) and Neil, a son, Rory.

DEATHS

MACLEWEN: Malcolma, journalist, author, socialist, died peacefully on Saturday 11 May 1996, in Emsayr, husband and 50 years companion of Anne, stepfather of Janet and Susan, and father of Kathy, grandfather to Jess, Dan, Becky, Ruby, Walter, Sam, Joe, Luke. We will remember him for his love, humour and zest for life. Cremation to take place at Tattenhoe Deane Crematorium on Tuesday 21 May at 12 noon. Flowers as desired. All enquiries, Murrell & Dewar, Ingham Road, Macclesfield, 01457 70206.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, telephone 0171-293 2811. Charges are 65p a line (VAT excl).

Birthdays

Miss Francesca Annis, actress, 51; Mr David Ashby MP, 56; Mr Richard Balle, MEP, 52; Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, former president of Malawi, 91; Mr Chay Blyth, yachtsman, 56; Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Buchanan, 71; Mr Denis Canna, playwright, 77; Mr Phil Drabble, broadcaster, 82; Sir Owen Owen, former chairman, BTR, 71; Baroness Hogg, head of the Prime Minister's Policy Unit, 50; Mr David Hubbard, chairman, Powell Duffryn, 60; Mr Peter Kirsten, cricketer, 41; Mr Geoffrey Lister, chief executive, Bradford & Bingley Building Society, 59; Lord McAlpine of West Green, former director, Sir Robert McAlpine & Sons, 54; Mr Edward Newman, MEP, 43; Canon John Oates, Rector, St Brice's, Fleet Street, 66; Miss Slim Phillips, actress, 62; Sir Peregrine Rhodes, former diplomat, 71; Sir Adam Ridley, executive director, Hambro Bank, 54; Sir Leslie Sharp, chief constable for Strathclyde, 60; Mrs Patricia Turner, former trade union leader, 69; Mrs Adrienne Uziel-Hamilton, circuit judge, 64; Mr Bob Woolmer, cricketer, 47.

Anniversaries

Births: Marguerite de Valois, Queen of Navarre, 1533; Thomas Gainsborough, painter, baptised 1727; Timothy Dwight, scholar and poet, 1732; Robert Owen, social reformer, 1771; Johann Peter Emil Hartmann, composer and organist, 1805; Sir Squire Bancroft, actor and manager, 1841; Henry Oliver Walker, painter, 1843; Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine, novelist, 1833; Otto Klemperer, conductor, 1885; Debra Henry IV of France, assassinated by the religious fanatic François Ravallac 1610; Matthew Gregory Lewis ("Monk Lewis"), novelist and playwright, 1818; August Strindberg, playwright, 1912; James Gordon Bennett, newspaper proprietor, 1918; Henry John Heinz, food manufacturer, 1919; Sir Henry Rider Haggard, novelist, 1925; Edmund Henry Hymann Allenby, First Viscount Allenby of Megiddo, field marshal, 1936; Billie Burke (Mary William Elizabeth Appleton Burke), actress, 1970; Jean Rhys (Williams), novelist, 1979. On this day: the English barons were victorious against Henry III at the Battle of Lewes, 1264;

the French army overpowered the Venetians at the Battle of Agnadello, 1509; Louis XIV became King of France at the age of four, 1643; Edward Jenner was successful in his first public vaccination experiment, 1796; the Oaks was first run as a race, 1779; Paraguay proclaimed her independence, 1811; the *Illustrated London News* was first issued, 1842; the last BBC programme was broadcast from the Savoy Hill Studio in London, 1932; the first London production of the musical comedy *The Prince of Pilsen* was staged, 1904; the Franco-British Exhibition opened at the White City, London, 1908; in Palestine, the British mandate ended and Israel was proclaimed an independent state, 1948; the first British-made Cinemascope film was shown, *Knights of the Round Table*, at the Empire cinema, Leicester Square, London, 1954; the Warsaw Pact was signed by the Soviet Union, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and East Germany, 1955; the Skylab space station was launched from Cape Kennedy, 1973; the first performance of the musical *Chess* was presented, London, 1986.

Today is the Feast Day of St Carthage the Younger, St Erembert, St Mary Mazzarelli, St Matthias, St Michael Garicotti and St Pontius of Clinch.

Lectures

National Gallery: Roland Fleischer, "May-be (II): Delft School, *The Refused Glass*, a search for its painter and its meanings", 1pm; Richard Calvoressi and Colin Wiggins, "In Conversation: Velázquez and Bacon", 4pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Laurence Magne, "Hauts Couleurs 1880-1920 des deux côtés de la Manche", 2.30pm. This Gallery: Sarah Greenberg, "Kiss Me Quick: visions of the seaside as a landscape of modernity from Brighton to St Ives", 1pm. British Museum: Paul Collins, "The Clash of Empires in the ancient Near East", 1.15pm. National Portrait Gallery: Paul Webb, "Richard Brinsley Sheridan: playwright and politician", 1.10pm. National Art Collections Fund (at Imperial College, London SW7): Professor Thomas Crow, "The State

We're In: the whys and wherefores of conceptual art", 5.45pm. University College London, London WC1: Professor Felix A. Hassan, "The Beginnings of Egyptian Civilisation: bull's tail and bird beaks", 5.30pm. London School of Economics, London WC2: Professor Colin Ward, "Anarchism in the 21st Century", 5.30pm.

Dinners

Road Haulage Association: Sir Colin Marshall, Chairman, British Airways plc, was the principal guest and speaker at the Annual Dinner of the Road Haulage Association held yesterday evening in the Great Room, Grosvenor House, London W1. Mr Pat Lee, National Chairman, presided.

Royal Over-Seas League

Lady Olga Maitland was the guest speaker at a meeting of the Royal Over-Seas League's discussion circle held yesterday evening at Over-Seas House, St James's, London SW1. Her

subject was "Current Developments in Ireland".

Foundation for Science and Technology / Royal Society

Lord Butterworth, Chairman, Foundation for Science and Technology, was in the chair at a lecture and dinner discussion held jointly with the Royal Society yesterday evening at the Royal Society, London SW1. Sir Ron Dearing, Professor Alan Southers and Dr Michael Young spoke on "A-Levels and the Qualifications Framework". Among those present were:

Lord Belfrage, Baroness Blackstone; Baroness Blith, Minister of State at the Home Office; Lady Butlerworth, Lord Dearing; Lord and Lady Haskel; Baroness Hilton; Lord Jenkins of Stirling; Baroness Lockwood; Baroness Patten of Whitby; Lord Quirk; Lord Rooker; Sir David Davies; Sir Anthony Seldon; Sir John Mason; Professor Sir Colin Spedding; Sir Cyril Taylor; Sir Michael Thornton MP; Dr Jeremy Bury MP; Mr Dan Dyball MP; Dr Lynne Jones MP; Mr Gary Walker MP; Mr G. Woodall MP; Mr Norman Barrow; Dr Eric Duckworth; Dr David Evans; Mr Robert Rees; Mr K.H. Taylor.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen welcomed M. Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic, and Mme Chirac on a State Visit to Britain. The Queen Royal attends the Queen Lecture, "Vaccination Past, Present and Future", at the Royal Society, London SW1, to commemorate the Bicentennial of Edward Jenner's contribution to vaccination. Princess Margaret attends a State Banquet at Buckingham Palace. The Duchess of Kent, the Royal Society, the Duchess of Marrow Trust, opens the new Research Institute, the Royal Free Hospital, London NW3.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 4pm. 1st Battalion Welsh Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 4pm.

Appointments

Mr Ian Mackay, to be British High Commissioner to the Republic of Ghana and, additionally, Ambassador (non-resident) to the Republic of Togo. Mr Richard Alan Bowman, to be a Master of the Supreme Court, Chancery Division.

The vision was of a popular share-owning democracy underpinning permanent Tory rule. But though the punters came and bought, many then sold their slices of the capitalist cake. They became a nuisance to the directors running the privatised utilities. In short, the plan failed. **David Walker** examines the myth of popular capitalism

Why Sid could never win

Yesterday shareholders in British Gas suffered a paper loss of about 27 pence for every share they owned. One of the most brilliant advertising campaigns of the Eighties gave us "Tell Sid" and hence today's headlines: "Sid's screwed". Sid the neighbourhood capitalist has turned out to be no more than a copywriter's dream. Many more people own shares today than in 1979. But mass share ownership was never going to happen. Popular capitalism, the idea that the socialist aim of common ownership was realisable through the market, has turned out to be a hollow promise.

But Sid the punter lives on. Some 2 million names have been registered for the Railtrack sale. But these punters are people with ready cash to spare. Once the bids are weighed for multiple applications from the same affluent households, the higher income social classes A, B and C1 will predominate.

For Sid, forking out £1,000 for Railtrack shares is a more expensive version of popping rood to the newsagent on Saturday for lottery tickets, except that it is a lot less of a gamble. Railtrack is a shoe-in - provided you hold the shares only until the guaranteed dividend is paid in the autumn and then, market conditions permitting, sell fast. It beats roulette.

But Sid the popular capitalist was always meant to be more than this. The point of popular capitalism was to spread ownership far and wide, but also deep. By owning shares people would change the way they thought about themselves. They would no longer simply be workers or consumers, they would start to think like capitalists. The idea was at its most fashionable in the early Eighties, in Thatcherism's bright early days. The then Chancellor of the Exchequer Nigel Lawson dusted off old Bow Group pamphlets he had written about the French Loi Morny promoting the growth of private shareholding by "little people". Lord Young of Graffham, businessman turned Thatcher adviser, extolled the enterprise society in which the public did not only see the benefits of private capitalism as a system but they started to love it, because it belonged to them.

Out of this political background came Sid and his cousins the dancing milk floats, which advertised the sale of the regional water authorities in 1989. Older Tories, going back at least to Harold Macmillan, had had notions of a shareholder democracy, sibling of homeowner democracy. Now privatisation, together with the sale of council homes, offered the chance to make the ambition real.

The political significance of this popularisation of private property was spelled out by Peter Walker the then energy secretary: a million new shareholders could mean 20,000 Tory voters in each of 500 constituencies, he said. Popular capitalism could

underpin permanent Tory rule. Why did Sid never reach the political maturity envisioned for him?

Even before the big privatisations began in 1984, the Treasury was backtracking. Giveaways and huge discounts to attract small investors were given way to cooler calculations. City institutions took on a larger role. Peter Walker had once toyed with the idea of a free distribution of shares in nationalised industry - proof, if it were needed, that the "stakeholder society" has as many godparents on the right as the left. Lack of imagination and fiscal conservatism killed that prospect.

Still, people flocked to buy shares. On flotation British Telecom was shared among 1.4 million different owners. But for many the privatisation issues were all the shares they ever bought. Over a half of all personal shareholders own stock in only one company; the average value

of shareholdings is around £1,000. Generally (BT is the exception) large numbers of the shareholders recruited at launch have sold up. In early 1987 British Gas had 4.4 million shareholders. Now that figure is just over 1.7 million and falling.

Popular capitalism never put down roots in the sense of giving the majority a direct stake in corporate ownership. They came, they sold, they put

the proceeds back into the building society. Peter Walker's political calculation turned out wrong - there is no evidence from polls that Sid is any more likely to vote Tory. Many Railtrack applicants will pocket the proceeds, vote Labour and expect Clare Short to be nice to them.

Some innovations from the Eighties survive and prosper, among them PEPs and personal pensions. But

they have not made people players in the equity markets. The institutional and affective distance between people and capital has, if anything, increased. Downsizing in the name of delivering value to hungry shareholders has brought a sense of trepidation to the property-owning middle classes. It turns out that the Conservative attempt to reconcile our identities as shareholders and workers has not worked; their interests are too frequently in conflict.

Sid's demise was inevitable. The system for raising capital is moving in favour of the big - and global - battalions. In January this year the Stock Exchange announced new measures that would further squeeze small shareholders when companies are floated. Trading in equities is less and less a personal decision, more a matter decided by complex technology. A recent Green Paper from the Department of Trade and Industry

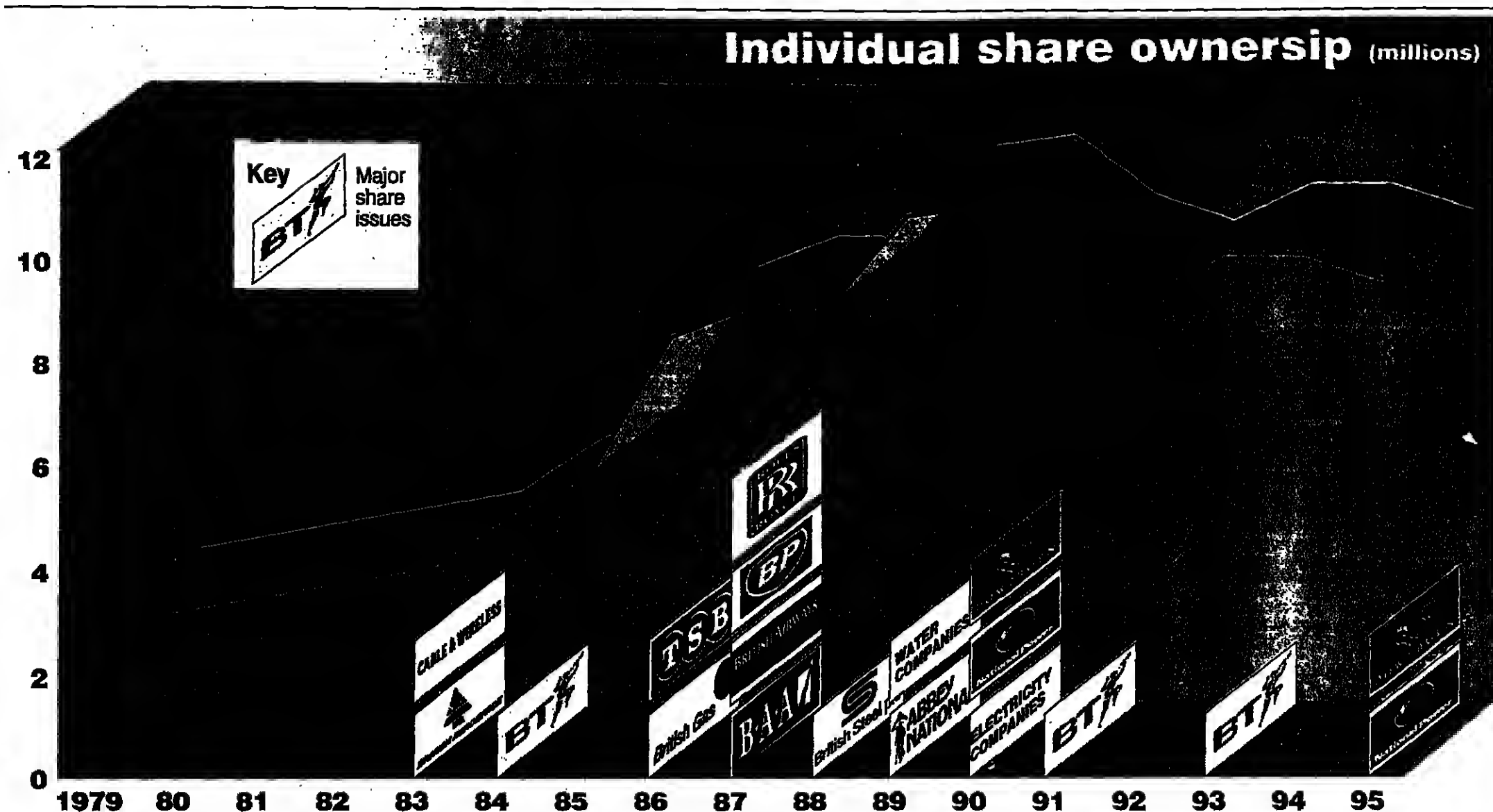
aiming to strengthen the arm of small shareholders at company meetings flies in the face of recent experience, as directors and big institutional shareholders have flaunted their strength in company after company. Richard Giordano, chairman of British Gas, put his foot in his mouth a couple of months ago in saying he wanted to ease "Aunt Maude" off his list of shareholders on the grounds she was a costly pest. Popular capitalists have become minor irritants.

The Government has also done its part in emasculating Sid. Read the 1986 prospectus for British Gas: not many Sids did. Was the name of Ms Clare Spottiswoode, the Ofgas regulator, mentioned? Of course not, yet the personality and predilections of this woman have come to matter a great deal over how much money British Gas makes and how much its shares will be worth. Did the prospectus warn Sid that within a

decade the company could be torn apart not through takeover but as an act of government policy?

Sid does not deserve too many tears. He has enjoyed 10 reasonably good years. As of yesterday shares floated at 135 pence were still worth about 200 pence and the dividends have been good. However, a pension fund investment would have performed better over the long run.

Sid's demise is a "salutary lesson" says Stuart Valentine of the share ownership advocacy group ProShare. But less so in what? The regulator's actions will have the effect of confirming that modern economies will not permit popular participation. We will have to find other ways of coping with the tensions arising when employees and consumers and shareholders are so distant and often alienated from the corporations that employ them and which, in theory, they partly own.



Graphic: Kristina Ferris. Research: Ben Summers. Source: ProShare

DIARY

Open up your heart, Mr Neil

Susie Orbach, therapist in need to the Princess of Wales, certainly became a household name after that *Panorama* show. Television appearances by the feminist media shrink, however, have been almost non-existent.

What a shame, then, that on a rare appearance tonight, on Andrew Neil's *The Midnight Hour*, the celebrity psychotherapist will be preaching to the converted. Ms Orbach is appearing to promote her new venture, *Antidote*, a "think-tank with an unconventional agenda". The organisation is designed to increase the "emotional literacy" of politicians, who should, she believes, "open up" and explain their feelings to each other.

A thoroughly commendable venture. There can be little doubt that Nicholas Soames MP, to name but one critic of Diana's *Panorama* performance, might benefit from a little emotional advancement. But who will Ms Orbach be encouraging to open up tonight? Only Charles Kennedy MP, notoriously garrulous talk media darling, and Tessa Jowell MP, Labour's spokesperson for women's issues - not to mention presenter Andrew Neil, whose emotional enthusiasm, so to speak, is not exactly repressed.

There are surely more emotionally troubled members who really could have learned a lot from Ms Orbach's wise words. Gordon Brown perhaps and maybe Peter Mandelson?

The old stand-up, head-down routine

The choice is yours. Become the new Harry Enfield or Eddie Izzard. Or get

a grade A in geography. Sixteen-year-old Simon Amstell from Ilford in Essex has chosen the latter. Simon entered the BBC Comedy awards for stand-up comedians by sending a video to the selection team. They were so impressed that they arranged a live gig for him. They were even more impressed with that and told him he had won a place in the London final held last night which could lead to a television spot.

Simon - and I hope he doesn't wake up screaming about this in 10 years' time - despairingly informed them he couldn't make it. Don't they know this is GCSE Study Week?

"The panel was stunned," said a spokeswoman for the awards yesterday. "It's such a pity. But he is taking his GCSEs very seriously."

So no comedy award for young Simon

but promotion to head prefect at the very least, I trust.

Redwood revives the fascists' rallying cry

Action Not Words, the title of John Redwood's new book of speeches is, as I pointed out last week, also the title of Sir Edward Heath's 1966 election manifesto, a point the far from Heathite Mr Redwood seems to have overlooked. But a reader from Hampshire, DM Kenyon, reminds me that it has an even older pedigree. "Action Not Words" was a slogan of the British Union of Fascists in the Thirties, something that both Mr Redwood and Sir Edward may have forgotten.

Jeers for the FA Cup cheerleaders

Wembley and the FA remain unrepentant about the ludicrous spectacle of American-style cheerleaders at the FA Cup Final.

When I asked a Wembley Stadium spokesman about it, he replied indignantly: "They weren't the American sort of cheerleaders at all. They didn't put their hands up in the air."

Superbrat on the NY art scene

Water lilies? Just water lilies? A whole room of water lilies?

You cannot be serious! John McEnroe has made the unlikely transition from brat genius of the Centre Court to art collector with his own gallery in the fashionable SoHo district of New York and a \$300,000 Renoir among the paintings within. In the new edition of the American art magazine *Artnews*, he tells how his conversion came about. It was at a junior tournament in Paris in 1977 when he was 18.

"I remember a Monet at a museum in Paris and thinking, I don't understand this guy at all... I got up real close to the painting. I couldn't make out anything. But then, of course, it started to dawn on me as I got further away. I thought, this is a different story back here. Over the course of the summer I realised, 'Wait a second. This Impressionist stuff is good'."

If the BBC wants a follow-up to *The Story of British Art*, they could do no better than Mr McEnroe on the Impressionists.

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The economic pendulum swings

Where is Keynes? Where is Friedman? Economics once debated the very future of the nation: how it should be governed, how it could generate growth. Nowadays, macro-economic debate is dead, buried in a suffocating classical consensus about free trade and low inflation. The real debates, and there are plenty of them, are about the small things: training policies, gas prices, education strategies. Today's inflation report from the Bank of England will be greeted with respectful technical analysis in the City. In the heyday of the monetarists, the debate about inflation was a debate about the very soul of the nation.

The shift from macro to micro isn't easy for politicians, the media and the general public to adjust to in Britain. These micro-economic debates are often technical, narrow and aimed at the long term. They do not deliver quick fixes or sweeping solutions to our economic ills. Macro-economics has become less controversial in part because we recognise that some problems (unemployment) are treatable only in the long term and others (inflation) may have been solved. So it is time to bid farewell to macro-economics as a force that can bring with it ambitious programmes of political reform? No, far from it.

Macro-economics remains hugely influential, albeit in a different way from the past. More importantly, it would be unwise to rule out the possibility that it will again recover its power to come up with ideas that can transform the way governments think, institutions work and ordinary people plan their lives. Powerful economic ideas insert themselves into policy-making in response to a deeply felt political need. That is the lesson of both Keynesianism and monetarism.

Keynesian economics emerged out of the experience of the Depression in the Thirties. Markets could not be relied upon to solve the unemployment problem; instead, government should step in to boost demand and kick-start recovery. Monetarism developed as a response to the problems of inflation in the Seventies. Economists who believed inflation was

caused by too many pound notes floating round the country called on government to set strict targets for the money supply. Each economic ideology provided its followers with a diagnosis of our economic malaise and a radical reform agenda for government to pursue.

In contrast, today's macro-economic orthodoxy is boring in the extreme. It is reminiscent of the classical idea that prevailed across the parties in the 19th century. Free trade is an unalloyed good. Inflation must be controlled. Governments must be fiscally prudent. Markets and competition are, broadly speaking, the best ways to allocate resources and promote efficiency.

But that doesn't mean there is no ideological debate about the economic role for government. Labour and the Conservatives disagree about the best way to bring about growth - Labour advocates training and investment incentives, the Conservatives further deregulation. Which is right may matter hugely for the economy and the people directly affected by such policies. The structure of markets for gas, water and electricity may be an arcane subject for debate, but it touches people directly. These are the modern economic debates: about how institutions and cultures can be reformed to make them more efficient and productive.

Yet the shift from macro-economic to micro-economic controversy is unlikely to be permanent. Just as Keynesian and monetarist economics grew in response to practical problems, when a new persistent difficulty arises, we can expect a new economics to develop, too. At the moment, it's clear what such an economics might be. The problem is the widespread sense of insecurity felt by many middle-class workers in the face of global competition and downsizing. The reaction is likely to come in moves to re-regulate the economy, move away from free trade and give workers more protection, perhaps at the expense of shareholders. The pendulum is starting to swing away from capital towards labour. Economics will swing with it.

Curbing Croatia

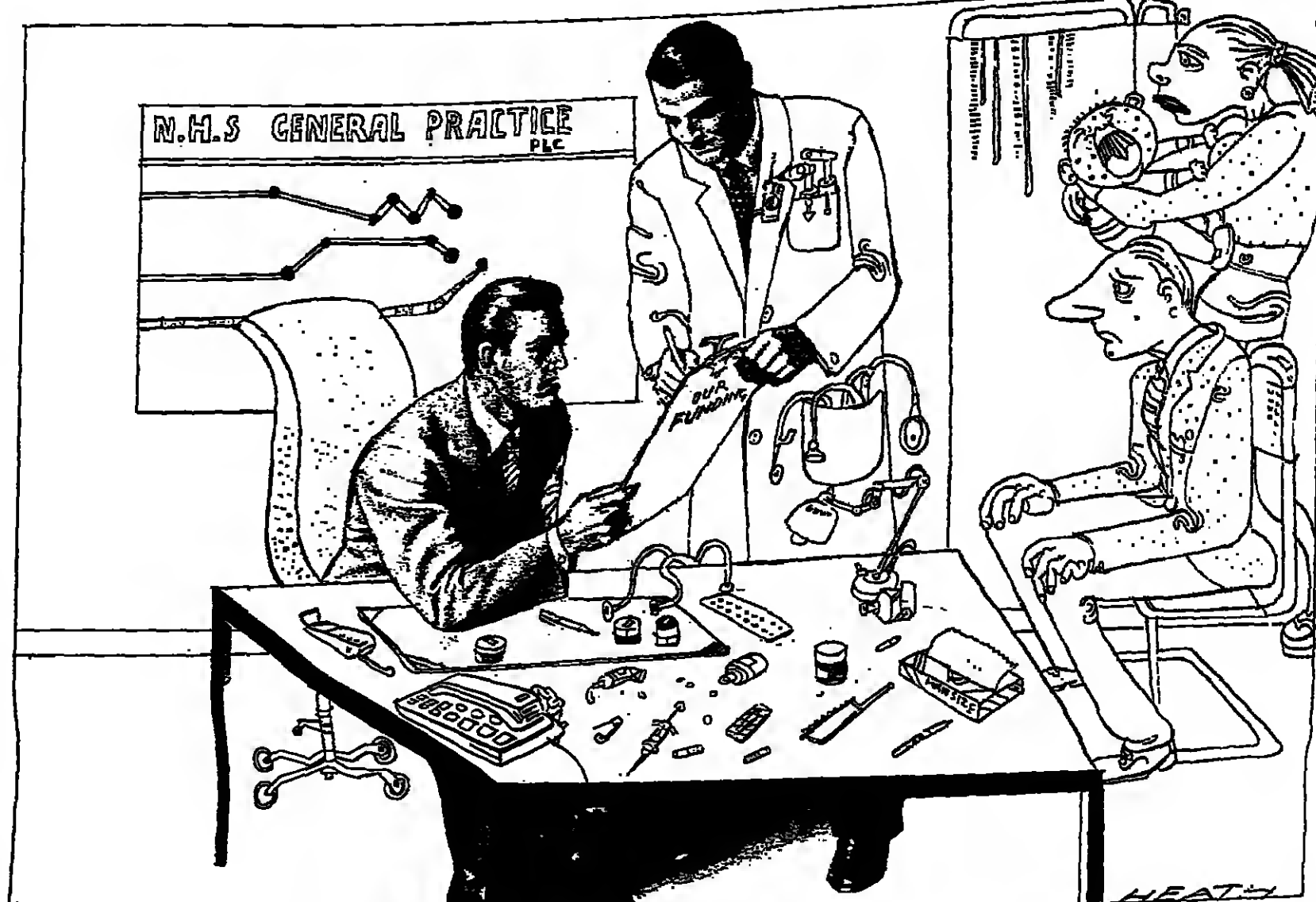
President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia has long shown a penchant for donning the kind of glittering uniforms that were once favoured by Yugoslavia's late dictator, Josip Broz Tito. Now he seems to want to govern with the aid of Tito's dictatorial style as well. He is refusing to allow the citizens of the Croatian capital to elect the mayor of their choice and is bullying the country's few remaining independent newspapers. On Wednesday, when the foreign ministers of the Council of Europe are due to decide on whether Croatia should be admitted into the institution, many will feel a strong temptation to wipe the smirk off the Balkan generalissimo's face by saying no. They should resist that temptation.

Since his victory over the Serb rebels of the Krajina region last summer, Tudjman has disappointed the West's slender hopes that he would govern in a democratic fashion. The state-run television continually accuses political opponents of working for foreign governments while the president has reneged on the promises to let Serb civilians who were not involved in the Krajina rebellion return to their homes. He has expelled many in his own country with his brutality with the memory of Croatia's bloodthirsty wartime fascist regime.

Why should a country run by such a man be admitted to a European institution, the main point of which is to safeguard human rights?

The unpalatable fact is that isolating Croatia from Western institutions will not serve the interests of those who are suffering most from Tudjman's authoritarianism. It is more likely to bolster the hardliners who insist the ruling party must remain in power for decades to save Croatia. If Croatia is excluded from the Council, these hardliners will be quick to wheel out the charge that Croatia is a victim of the West, given that several countries with human rights records as shaky as Croatia's, such as Russia, Slovakia and Romania, have already been admitted to the Council.

Freedom is not dead in Croatia but under threat. Indeed, it is the very vigour of the opposition press in exposing the corruption of President Tudjman's entourage that has roused him to such desperate methods. The cause of democracy in Croatia will be best served if the country is admitted to the Council of Europe, but that the maximum pressure is applied to make sure that Croatia then abides by the conditions it has signed up to concerning free speech and human rights.



'We should have become spin doctors'

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Take a long view and escape public spending dilemma

Sir: There is a way in which the Labour Party can solve the dilemma of wishing to increase public expenditure without being seen to increase public expenditure. It would involve adopting longer time horizons and reforming the basis of cost analysis. Housing provides an example of what this would mean.

Everyone recognises that we have some of the worst housing in the EU, much of it occupied by the eight million households receiving benefit. The main problem with the housing stock is its poor thermal efficiency, which leads to widespread fuel poverty and ill health. It is estimated that the cost to the health service due to cold- and condensation-related illness is more than £1bn a year. Faced with the problem, the Government has consistently suffered policy paralysis for fear of abusing the PSBR. Its only answer, the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme, barely scratches the surface.

However, if the problem were to be tackled within a 10-year time frame and the capital costs and consequent benefits of undertaking a national thermal upgrading programme considered within a single accounting system, then the picture would change dramatically. Improving the national average thermal efficiency by 30 per cent would have a profound impact on the worst cases. For example:

1. The problem of fuel poverty and its impact on benefits would be progressively eliminated.
2. Health services costs attributed to bad housing would be virtually eliminated.
3. In employment terms, one new job is created for every £35,000 spent on the retrofitting system.
4. In addition, there is the respondent factor. The European Commission estimates that at least one extra job is created for every new full-time job in construction, resulting in a substantial switch from an unemployment cost burden to income from tax and National Insurance.

In due course it will be possible to monetise the physical and atmospheric damage caused by the burning of fossil fuels, 30 per cent of which is attributable to housing. For the moment, a target of 30 per cent overall reduction in the carbon dioxide emissions due to housing must be seen as an aspect of the "precautionary principle" alleged to be government policy.

A unitary capital-cost/revenue-benefit approach to policy on housing would show that a radical national retrofit programme for housing would yield a net benefit to the Exchequer over a 10-year timescale. This approach to accounting would release a whole range of other possibilities without damaging the bottom line. It might even liberate us from an idiotic system which will show that the *Sea Empress* disaster has contributed to GDP on account of the clean-up operation.

Professor Peter F. Smith
Director
Sustainable Building Network
University of Sheffield

Gay fears of the top brass

Sir: After reading your leading article on "Gays in the military" (11 May) twice without discerning a clear argument of principle, I am driven to the conclusion that homosexuals are the only remaining sizeable minority against whom prejudiced slurs are deemed sufficient to justify discrimination.

There are only two valid requirements: an impartial disciplinary code which prohibits any sexual conduct contrary to good order and discipline while on duty or on service premises; and the overdue introduction of a services culture set resolutely against prejudice, discrimination and mistreatment directed at those who belong to racial, religious or sexual minorities. I vividly recall attending, as secretary of the Homosexual Law Reform Society, the debates that preceded the 1967 Sexual Offences Act, and in particular the ludicrous outburst with which Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein responded to an inquiry as to how other Nato countries with more liberal laws coped with this "problem". "We are not French, and we are not other nationalities. We are British, thank God!" our war hero retorted vehemently.

Am I wrong in detecting a whiff of xenophobia, as well as homophobia, in the pronouncements of our present-day service chiefs? Their feverish fantasies of hanky-panky in the barracks showers remind me of the Duke of Wellington's observation that while he didn't know what his troops did to the enemy, they certainly frightened him.

ANTHONY GREY
London E14

Aged parent

Sir: On 13 May, my great-aunt Mrs Alison Graham, of Edinburgh, celebrated her 95th birthday. Her father, Sir Alexander Christison, 2nd Baronet, was 73 when she was born. It would be interesting to know whether there is anyone else alive today who can claim that their father was born in the year Franz Schubert died - 1828.

PAUL CHRISTISON EDWARDS
Bedford

Spring greens

Sir: One of the glories of Italian gastronomy is the profusion of young shoots and buds eaten in the spring and the bewildering choice of names for them (letter, 10 May). I have enjoyed cultivated hops in Kent, wild ones in the West Riding, probably lupuli, wild asparagus in Umbria, *bruscandoli* in Lazio, *puntarelle* in Rome and wild fennel in the Marche. They all look different and taste different.

GILLIAN RILEY
London N16

Unborn rights

Sir: It is time to change the abortion laws if we are to avoid the careless disposal of life recorded in Friday's *Independent* ("Aborted baby lived 45 minutes", 10 May). In generations to come, people will look back with disbelief at our scant regard for the rights of unborn children.

The Rev Trevor H. Patterson
Ashford, Surrey

Naval disaster

Sir: News that the total tonnage of our merchant navy is now 8 per cent of its 1979 level suggests that the Conservative Party is succeeding where Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm and Hitler failed.

DEREK STREETON
Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex

Protect children from BSE

Sir: I write to endorse the views of Peter Robb (letter, 10 May). The crisis over BSE and CJD is not primarily one over Europe or even farming, but one of public health. More than 12 British teenagers and young adults have contracted a new and fatal brain disease. We do not know its cause, but eating infected beef is by far the likeliest. If this is the case, it is reasonable to fear that more cases will continue to appear. We all hope that precautions taken since 1989 will reduce any transmission, but they may not have been well enforced and they have not stopped the spread among cattle. Our closest neighbours, France and Ireland, have chosen far greater precautions.

If the British measures prove inadequate, any human epidemic will last many years longer than it might have done, unless parents stop feeding beef to their children. Along with many other doctors, I believe this is a prudent option until the statistical risks are much better known.

Like Peter Robb, I am disappointed that the serious media in Britain has been deflected from paying attention to long-term health risks. Government and media have promoted a peculiar view of "science" which has blurred the distinction between facts and interpretations, and excluded any intelligent debate about how to manage uncertainty. I am puzzled that the doctors' professional organisations have not yet challenged this. Perhaps I have missed something, but where are the voices of the BMA, our royal colleges, or the British Paediatric Association?

Who will now speak for teenagers and young people?

Dr JOHN LAUNER
Tavistock Clinic, London NW3

Tories before the courts

Sir: If and when the High Court finds against Lady Porter and her associates, the Prime Minister will no doubt be able to refuse any adverse comment until the Court of Appeal has pronounced - and then on through the House of Lords into Europe, if the Government has not ended British participation in its courts by then.

Mr Major and his colleagues have never been slow to condemn political opponents who find themselves in a similar situation. Nor, when the courts of first instance have found against his own government, has he hesitated to pronounce on the (de)merits of the judgments handed down, instead of waiting to see what happens on appeal.

HARVEY R. COLE
Winchester

No European war

Sir: The current wrangling over the genesis of Second World War fighters is interesting; but more so is the fact that apparently no one questions the wild assertion by Jonathan Glancey (article, 8 May) that in 1939 "British manpower and technology was directed to building a better Europe". This is wide of the mark on a matter of current importance. The truth is that the British government and nation then were (quite properly, it might be thought) concerned almost exclusively with national survival: if in their plight they cared anything for the world beyond their shores, it was for the Empire.

ROGER LAKE
York

The grass is always greener over here

First impressions are often worth remembering. When Robert Benchley first went to Venice, he came back home: "Streets full of water - please advise", but that was just an American-style joke. A far more interesting reaction was provided by the French writer Alphonse Allais 100 years ago when he went from Paris to Venice for the first time and wrote: "The most striking thing about the city of Venice is the complete absence of the smell of horse dung...", which, I think, tells you a great deal about what cities were like in the 1890s.

Well, I have just made my first Eurostar trip to Paris and I think it is worth recording my first impressions while they are hot and sticky on my mind, a bit like the *pain au chocolat* stains on my tie. Now the one thing I knew about the Eurostar route is that while going through Kent the Eurostar express trundles along at a snail's pace and while going through northern France to Paris it races along at supersonic speeds. The reason for this, we have always been told, is that the Tory government, in true British style, has never been able to get its act together to build the special Channel tunnel link line while the French, with the determination that has



MILES KINGSTON

already given them a nuclear power programme, the TGV and bombs in the Pacific, built their high-speed rail link many years ago.

Now it is certainly true that the Conservative Party's main remaining talent is for selling things off - the Tory government is a car boot sale on a gigantic scale - and this doesn't help to get new railways built, but I discovered at the weekend that there is another reason for the difference between Eurostar speeds in Kent and in northern France, and that is that there is nothing worth looking at in northern France.

It is such a dull, flat, uniform landscape between the Channel and Paris that the only natural reaction is to get through it as fast as possible. Between you and the horizon, the land barely rises or falls at all, and if it does so, it is with no more

enthusiasm than a brackish pond on a dull day. And on the landscape itself there is little more to be seen than vast fields merging into each other, occasionally separated by long straight roads leading to grey little towns. There are many parts of France with delightful scenery, as we all know, but Eurostarland (Eurostarland?) is not one of them.

It is very different when you pop up in Kent from the tunnel. The first thing you see (apart from a forest of metal fences) is the side of a chalk cliff. It is the tallest thing you have seen since you left Paris and looks immense. And then you start crawling through the Kentish countryside to give you a close-up, slow-motion view of an extremely intimate landscape, full of gardens, and trees in blossom, and oast houses, and pub gardens and village corners.

Now I know that this is deceptive, and that Euro-regulations have forced us to convert our oast houses into stockbroker homes, and grub up our apple orchards, and make Kent not the garden of England so much as the ornamental border of England until Derek Cooper is trying into his beer (which is probably brewed by Whitbread under a false name), but it still looks a lot better than what you get on the other side of the

Channel. Even when you get into the suburbs of London, you realise (if you have just returned from Paris and are still seeing things through French eyes) that there is nothing in France to rival these suburban gardens jostling next to each other, these little New Gardens leading up to their own Durdhamin, each exactly the same in shape and size, and each completely different in shrubs and ambience.

My journey then took me through London and out on the old Great Western line, where on a spring evening I saw many a hot air balloon floating in the distance and, just the other side of Reading, what looked like a field containing llamas, and rabbits scattering for cover as the train came past, and I felt that there was something good about the old place...

Look, I am as Francophile as the next man, and I would rather spend a weekend in Paris than London, and I know that Ashford International Station looks like a temporary arrangement of scaffolding (and so does Waterloo International) but I still think the best advice for a Eurostar traveller from Waterloo is this: if you intend to do any sleeping on the train, do it on the French side.

comment

Social democracy or just soap opera?

Blair is right in thinking personality clashes and petty jealousies are silly. Yet he can't ignore them

For more than a year, Tony Blair has been periodically warned that the greatest threat to a new Labour administration may come not from the money markets or the Conservative benches or the press or even from left-wing rebels, but from the poisoned relationships among his own senior colleagues. New Labour is a traditional socialist party in one respect at least – its compulsive unfraternity.

That Gordon (Brown) doesn't like Peter (Mandelson) and that Robin (Cook) isn't keen on either Gordon or Peter, and that John (Prescott) has grave reservations about Gordon and Peter and Robin – and so on – has been the small change of Labour gossip for ages. It hasn't got out of hand. So far, it hasn't affected policy. But it has been a perpetual distraction.

Blair himself is culpable in not taking enough notice of these things. He is not much interested in the pecking order around him – who is trying to suck up, who's feeling threatened. He has worried about improving his relations with Gordon Brown ever since the leadership battle. But by and large he is not sensitive to the egos around him. As one shadow minister put it to me a few weeks ago: "He thinks all these things are silly and he just doesn't notice them."

Silly or not, after the eruption of publicity about Brown and Mandelson's tiff, Blair has come to realise that it matters. MPs and staff are being firmly reminded that no one, other than the leader, is more important than the triumvirate of Brown, Cook and Prescott. Blair's people express irritation at the idea of a Brown-Mandelson grudge match being portrayed as a cootest of heavyweight equals.

yesterday I was brisily told that the Shadow Chancellor cannot be compared with a relatively new MP however friendly he was with the leader and however eminent he had been as director of communications.

These are deep waters. It would be amazing if Blair pushed Mandelson away from him – and dangerous. They are too close. But if Blair becomes Prime Minister, then his relationship with Mandelson is bound to change, just as Blair's ascent to the Labour leadership changed his relationship with Brown. And what is happening now is an early sign of that.

In Number 10, Blair will be surrounded by a different hierarchy of officials. Where in opposition the circle of influence around him has been fluid and informal, in power it will become rigid and sharper edged. Such, at least, has been the experience of every previous prime minister. In these circumstances, Mandelson will become if not just another minister, then at least another minister. I suspect that he will flourish. But he will flourish differently.

For Peter Mandelson to change his role is one thing; he is already doing that. But the cross-cross of personal dislikes and jealousies is far more widespread than his coldness with Brown. There are great Scottish feuds. There are female feuds. There are class feuds and black feuds and Welsh feuds.

It is all, in short, exactly like the average playground. And certainly, the rivalries Blair will have to struggle with are no worse than those that divide the Conservatives. In some ways they are easier. There is less of a gap between,



ANDREW MARR

Left to fester, these rows will have highly political results

say, Gordon Brown and Robin Cook on public spending than between the current Chancellor and the Cabinet's right-wingers on the same subject. (Indeed, if there are rumblings in the Labour camp about Brown being over-assertive, they should look over the fence at Kenneth Clarke's current behaviour on taxation. That's robust for you.)

But the Labour feuds are given an edge of bitterness by the long years of doing nothing much. The tedious disappointments of opposition sap the morale and make it hard to keep one's sense of perspective. The rows are not primarily political in the sense of ideological. But left to fester, they will have highly political results. If Labour reaches power, these will, after all, be people in big jobs, spending large amounts of public money. Their tiffs will no longer smoulder harmlessly in the Commons tea-room; they will flare through the corridors of power, "geared up", as they say in the City,

to the tune of millions of taxpayers' pounds.

And Labour has been here before. Blair's nightmare is that New Labour will, in power, closely resemble the old Labour world of the Wilson governments described by Richard Crossman in his diaries. It is hard now to remember just how shocking they seemed when they first came out in the 1970s, seemingly reducing cabinet government to the level of "Jim sneaked to Marcia, who told Harold that Tony was furious about the fact that Hugh had never trusted Roy, who..." A teacher told me at the time that the reputation of British government would never recover.

And it didn't, really, though the Crossman revelations now seem tame by comparison with what followed. We've been through the rummaging of the Thatcher cabinet, Tony Benn's memoirs, Yes, Minister, Alan Clark's diaries, and the leaks of John Major's salty private descriptions of his colleagues. We have been educated numb about the longeurs, personality clashes and private bitchery of politics – just office politics, perhaps, but played out by people of abnormally powerful personality, ambition and drive.

Even so, Crossman's diaries still mark an important moment in the developing understanding of British politics. They broke deeper into the heart of cabinet government than anything by any political scientist. Crossman's ruthless and exhilarating smashing of traditional taboos about discretion and outward loyalty changed the way journalists saw the game and, therefore, how voters see it, too. He helped to kick open the door to personality-based lobby jour-

nalism, which concentrates more than is ideal on trivial spats and rows and less on policy; to that extent, Crossman is an author of our gossipy political culture.

It is easy to see him as a degrading influence. He certainly made life harder for politicians and easier for newspapers. But the innocence lost was largely the innocence of voters who, before, had known too little about how Whitehall and Westminster worked. It was not dignified. But it was honest, or at least more honest than the pompous sonorities of most political memoirs, or the self-justifying windiness of Harold Wilson's own books.

Crossman, though, wasn't simply the first modern minister to write about cabinet-level politics for publication in a certain way. He was a Labour politician writing about particular Labour colleagues and Labour governments. Because the big story of the Wilson years was disillusionment, Crossman's story of petty and vindictive feuding had special resonance.

This is why a revival of Crossman-era bickering would be so particularly damaging to a Blair-led government.

It would be such an easy story to write, soap opera not social democracy. The country would find it vaguely familiar. Critics from right and left would be triumphantly vindicated. However trivial, it would tell Britain that this was an administration without central purpose, driving itself into the sand, just like Wilson's. After years of lecturing the back benches about discipline, it is time for Labour's high command to practice a little better what they so eloquently preach.

Freedom to risk your life

Mountaineering is dangerous, but legislation will not deter climbers, writes Stephen Goodwin

There was little surprise among mountaineers yesterday at the grim news from Mount Everest – at least eight climbers have died in the past few days and several more have suffered severe frostbite as high winds and blizzards have raked the 8,848m peak.

With the advent in the 1990s of commercial expeditions to the world's highest mountain, the growth in the number attempting Big E made a death toll on the scale of last week-end's inevitable. Clients on the expedition led by the New Zealander Rob Hall – himself presumed dead in the freezing hell above the South Col – had paid £43,000 for the trip. The fee, one of the highest charged for Everest, included a satellite link to call home but no guarantee of a safe return.

Three people are confirmed dead from Mr Hall's team, including Yasuko Namba, a 47-year-old Japanese woman, who had just become the oldest woman to climb Everest. Scott Fischer, the leader of a mainly US commercial expedition, is also feared dead.

The climbing community has been uneasy about commercial expeditions. The idea smacks of package holidays, and it conflicts with the sport's principle of self-reliance. It also leads to overcrowding. Yesterday there were reported to be some 50 climbers spread about the Nepal side of Everest. May is the busiest month on Everest. Some 20 climbers tackled the summit on Friday but were hit by storms early on their descent. Frost-bitten and exhausted climbers were still being helped down yesterday.

Mr Hall and Mr Fischer are mountaineers whose track records stand comparison with the best in the hard game of Himalayan mountaineering. Mr Hall may have sacrificed his own chance of survival by remaining with a dying American client. He reportedly told his pregnant wife by satellite-phone on Saturday "Hey, look, don't worry about me", but he was already badly frost-bitten and in a desperate situation above the South Col (8,400m).

Paying for a place on an expedition may generate a false sense of security, as one is part of a group led by a professional. Mr Hall had been to the summit of Everest five times, which was part of the reason he was able to charge such high fees. But as Tom Prentice, editor of the magazine *Climber*, summed it up: "In the final analysis, you are on your own. I'm not sure some of the people going on

these trips know what they could be getting into."

Steve Bell, managing director of Himalayan Kingdoms Expeditions, the UK leader in this field, is certain his clients know the score. But he acknowledges that for some firms there may be "conflict" between the experience required of punters and commercial viability. Mr Bell's firm has a mainly British team of three guides and seven clients on the Tibetan north side of Everest. They sat out the storm in a camp at 6,500m. Each client paid £16,000.

Mr Bell has just started putting together an expedition from the Nepal side for May 1997 for which the fee will be

Commercial climbs conflict with the principle of self-reliance

£25,000. But he insists commercial considerations never come before experience. Clients for Everest must have climbed above 6,500m – which means in the Himalayas or other great ranges – and be psychologically suitable.

Anyone coming their way on a trip would most likely be found out above base camp and ordered down for the safety of all concerned, says Mr Bell. "He would just have bought a very expensive trekking holiday." The difference in cost between a climb from the south side or from Tibet is largely the result of the high peak fee charged by the Nepalese – \$70,000 for a team of five and \$10,000 each for additional members. The money goes into the government's coffers, but how much filters down to some of the poorest people on earth is another controversy.

Since Everest was first climbed in 1953, 750 people have reached the summit and 130 have died on the mountain. Cries for regulation in the wake of climbing accidents are now newsworthy. After the 1985 Matterhorn disaster, the *Times* thundered: "Is it common-sense? Is it allowable?" In 1982, following more alpine deaths, Queen Victoria wanted to "mark her disapproval" by legislation. But Gladstone doubted the wisdom of interfering – advice that mountaineers, who above all else value the freedom of their sport, would agree with today, despite the deaths on Everest.

Sinn Fein's fatal dilemma

Bill Clinton may want a ceasefire but the IRA needs British assurances, writes David McKittrick

The republican movement is, as the Americans say, between a rock and a hard place, poised in some anguish between peace and war; and it is the Americans who are helping to keep that pressure mounting all the time.

The noises from Washington over the weekend, pressing for a new ceasefire, are a telling reminder that if bombing continues the republicans can expect only isolation – no more visas for Gerry Adams, no more chats in the White House, no more access to the corridors of power.

The republicans are probably more worried about the loss of transatlantic influence than they are afraid of the 10 June negotiations starting without them. The Clinton administration has significantly enhanced the standing and prestige of Sinn Fein; the loss of it would be sorely felt.

The republicans also stand on the verge of losing large swathes of Irish America, that powerful element which, quite independently of Bill Clinton, has much valuable political clout and finance to offer. Even the most pro-republican Irish-Americans are now absolutely adamant that without a ceasefire nothing can be done for Sinn Fein.

The isolation incurred by a refusal to cease fire would be domestic as well as international. Neither British nor Irish ministers will meet Sinn Fein until there is a new cessation, and almost everyone in Ireland will support the two governments' insistence that without a ceasefire Sinn Fein will not be allowed into the 10 June talks.

There is another point of pressure on the republicans to give peace another chance, and it comes from their own people, those 10 or 11 per cent of Northern Ireland voters who regularly support Sinn Fein. The IRA may bluster that it is prepared for another 25 years of violence, but the people of the Falls Road and Ardoyne are plainly horrified at such a prospect.

Gerry Adams, in the years he spent rushing towards the 1994 ceasefire, in effect put his movement into negotiation mode: the concept of victory was quietly discarded from the republican lexicon and replaced by that of peace. His argument that the British could not be defeated militarily has permeated throughout the republican psyche, and helps to explain why so many republicans were dismayed when the IRA attacked Docklands in February. No one in the IRA has publicly mapped out a route to victory; there is a general feeling that going back to

violence would alienate the Americans and all the other elements who stuck their necks out in the cause of bringing Sinn Fein into politics, and that in the end it would not work.

In fact, from a republican point of view, returning to violence could be the most dangerous course of all. No one doubts that the IRA is still a formidable killing machine, but in the long term it needs a purpose and a realisable goal to sustain it. Fighting on against a backdrop of growing lack of belief and apathy among its supporters would invite eventual defeat for the IRA.

To the republican mindset, therefore, the most likely means of progress lies in a revived peace process. Although the Docklands bomb was a shattering blow to the previous process,

The republicans stand on the verge of losing large swathes of Irish America

cess, the dust cleared to reveal a near-universal belief, among republicans and non-violent nationalists alike, that the only way ahead lies in returning to a ceasefire followed by all-inclusive peace talks. For nationalists, a new paradigm has been firmly established.

The reader may well wonder why, if this is so, the republicans are not therefore hastening in the direction of a new ceasefire. Such a development, in advance of the June talks, is not out of the question, but at the moment it has to be said that the odds seem stacked against it. This is principally because the republicans suspect the British have a completely different paradigm in mind.

Sinn Fein will only press for a ceasefire if it is convinced the talks will represent real peace negotiations and not simply be a decommissioning conference. Republicans look at the Unionist leaders David Trimble and Ian Paisley and conclude that they will do real political business only under intense pressure. They think such pressure can only come from the Irish Prime Minister, John Bruton, and from John Major. They think that Mr Bruton places far too much importance on Unionist interests, and cannot be relied upon to further their agenda. And they have the



Gerry Adams greeting Bill Clinton in Belfast

Photograph: Sygma

deepest suspicions about Mr Major's intentions.

There is, of course, nothing new in this, since it is axiomatic to republicans that all British governments are perfidious. Although both London and Dublin have given numerous assurances that the talks will be for real and will not simply consist of republicans being bartered to hand over weaponry, republican suspicions remain.

If another ceasefire is engineered and the talks then turn out to be a charade, the credibility of the Adams leadership would be gone. To take a chance and go for it, he needs some

cast-iron assurance that they will not get bogged down on the decommissioning issue. And this raises the question of what British intentions toward Northern Ireland really are – and so one in Ireland, Unionist or nationalist, is ever certain of that.

The talks have been arranged in such a way that they could indeed be the wide-ranging negotiations Sinn Fein wants. But they might instead turn out to be based on the preference of some British policy-makers for an approach of containment.

Some in government are prepared for a deep-rooted negotiation that might lead to a historic reworking of

the political arrangements that brought Northern Ireland into being in 1920-21. But others view the idea of a political deal to which everyone, including republicans, could subscribe as a mirage.

This is the mindset of containment. It held sway on the security side for many years, based on the philosophy that the most which could be done was to keep the lid on until the IRA eventually got tired and gave up. This approach was visible at many points during the peace process, which did not fit the traditional London view that progress would come through locating an element of middle ground, however small, and incrementally building upon it.

Although this depends on the unlikely idea of Mr Trimble and John

Sinn Fein will only press for a ceasefire if it is convinced of real peace negotiations

Hume of the SDLP striking a deal together, it still has many adherents in government. Many on the British side were, and are, temperamentally more comfortable with this approach, which is aimed not at drawing militant republicans into politics but at freezing them out and eventually defeating them. Republican sceptics point to London's emphasis on the decommissioning issue in support of the argument that the British see the talks as an attempt to clobber Sinn Fein rather than strike a deal with them.

For the Government, the issue is a delicate one. Ministers clearly wish to maintain the pressure for decommissioning. Yet if republicans are convinced this will be the centrepiece of the talks, then there will be no ceasefire. No ceasefire will mean no republicans at the conference table, which means that talks on decommissioning would be largely academic.

Bill Clinton, John Hume and Dublin are hopeful that a new offer of entry into politics will at some stage bring about another ceasefire. The republicans, not yet convinced that John Major wants to bring them in from the cold, are torn between talks that could be a trap and more violence which could bring eventual ruin.

If we can't kill speed with advertising, we can by criminalising it, writes Christian Wolmar

It's time you put your foot down, minister

No parent watching the road safety advertising campaign featuring home videos of children killed by speeding motorists can fail to be moved. The very gaucheness of the footage, badly lit images of children larking about or sitting quietly on a sofa, adds to the poignancy. Today, the second phase begins, with radio advertisements featuring the voices of relatives of those killed talking about their bereavement and stressing the need for more careful driving.

But the very power of these advertisements raises a problem, for the campaign against speeding has run for five years and there have been few signs of any impact. Drink driving, by contrast, has been drastically reduced thanks to a marked change in social acceptability stimulated by effective advertising. The fundamental problem is that we are all guilty. Everyone with

a driver's licence has broken the speeding laws. It is, indeed, the likes of us who are still responsible for the vast majority of the 1,200 deaths each year – including 160 children – caused by excessive speed, a third of those killed on the roads. The failure of Transport's new advertising agency, Abbott Mead Vickers, to go for broke with its innovative campaign, Cilla Snowball, the agency's head of client services, says the shock treatment was necessary "because drivers are very resistant. They see accidents and crabs on telly all the time, and we had to break through people's complacency."

The difficulty for the campaigners is that speeding is much more deeply ingrained. The latter was principally a one-off, an aberration by otherwise sensible people. Speeding is part of the

culture of using cars. We drive principally to get from A to B as quickly as possible and speeding is almost an inherent part of the process.

Ms Snowball identifies three widespread views that prevent speeding being seen as socially unacceptable. First, it is considered to be a minor infringement; second, everyone thinks they are a good driver; and third, the legislation is not properly enforced. To make speeding a more serious issue is to challenge the unfettered right of motorists to use their cars as they wish. But it would be effective. There would be very little speeding if you lost your licence every time. Or if you were fined £500 or £1,000 for being 10 miles per hour over the limit.

Widespread enforcement could be introduced. Every time speed cameras are installed, the police and ministers say this is only a way

to prevent speeding and not to raise revenue. But why not? Speed cameras cost £27,000 each. Why not turn them on all the time, ensure that everyone caught is actually fined, and spend the money on installing yet more cameras?

If ministers really think that speeding is as serious as drink-driving, then they have to criminalise it. There should be an invasion of traffic humps and other measures. Virtually the whole roads budget could be allocated to this in an emergency programme that would transform residential streets. Of course such moves would delight motorists – and that means most voters – as much as following a caravan up a windy mountain road. But at least many families would be spared the prospect of being asked for video footage of their dead children for the next campaign.

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City leans on Pearson to name Barlow successor

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

City pressure is building on Pearson to name an outsider to succeed Frank Barlow, the media and leisure company's beleaguered chief executive, institutional investors have told the *Independent*.

Unexpectedly high losses at Mindscape, Pearson's ill-starred US CD-Rom investment, was only the latest disappointment, the investors

said. The company remains unfocused and its clutch of assets too diverse. "At the very least, the company should announce as soon as possible a successor to Barlow," said one large investor, as a first step toward a radical reorganisation. Moreover, an internal successor, the preferred option for Pearson's current management, is unlikely to satisfy institutional shareholders. Among possible candidates from within the company are

Greg Dyke, head of Pearson Television, and senior executives David Bell and John Makinson. Mr Barlow's successor is scheduled to be named next year. A Pearson spokeswoman said last night: "I am sure shareholders are looking for comfort and reassurance. It remains our intention to move on the issue next May."

Senior management, including Mr Barlow, have been meeting with shareholders since the beginning of this month, and

further contacts are expected until well into June. Pearson declined to comment on the substance of investors' comments, although the spokeswoman confirmed that shareholders have been asking about succession plans.

In recent months, Mr Barlow has overseen a restructuring of operating units, introducing clearer lines of management control. But the company remains what one analyst last night called "a typical con-

glomerate: unfocused and underperforming."

Some investors came to Mr Barlow's defence yesterday, however. "He has made a real effort to transform the company," said one. "But he has not always been able to carry his board."

Pearson has been the subject of intense speculation in recent months, as the market lay bets it would either be taken over or forced to accept radical change proposals. While shares

have shot up in recent days, they have still underperformed those of other media companies in recent years.

News that Mindscape would post losses of up to £40m this year - particularly infuriated some shareholders. "It is clear that no one is taking responsibility for the disaster at Mindscape," said one.

The company has received proposals from two sets of advisers - Baring and McKinsey - laying out ways of enhancing shareholder value. These include a radical break-up plan, creating several companies out of one. Henderson Crosthwaite, the City broking firm, has calculated a breakup value of up to 900p a share, compared to last night's close of 712p.

Among the proposals is a plan to spin off the company's television interests, worth about £700m. Reports over the weekend about the possible spinoff helped push the shares up 13p yesterday.

These assets - which include Thames Television, Grunty Worldwide and US-based ACI - are believed to be among the most attractive.

It is also believed that Pearson Television's Mr Dyke would be interested in seeing a separate listing for his subsidiary, and is uncomfortable with the "culture" of Pearson's head office. But a spin-off would leave Pearson holding less valuable book publishing and leisure assets, as well as its Mindscape subsidiary.

'Draconian' curbs wipe £1bn off British Gas shares

MICHAEL HARRISON

More than £1bn was wiped off the value of British Gas yesterday as the industry regulator Clare Spottiswoode unveiled "draconian" new price curbs which are almost certain to result in the company opting to go to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The shock announcement of new price controls on British Gas's pipeline business, TransCo International, are far more severe than had been expected and could jeopardise both the company's planned demerger next year and the introduction of full competition in the domestic gas market from 1998.

The new price formula will reduce TransCo's revenues by £650m-£850m next year - more than its profits in the last two years and bigger than British Gas's total dividend payment last year.

British Gas shares plunged 27p to 201p - their biggest one-day fall apart from during the stock market crash in 1987 - as investors panicked about its ability to continue paying dividends under the new formula.

The new controls, due to take effect next April and run for five years, will cut prices TransCo charges to gas shippers by 20-28 per cent in the first year and then keep prices to RPI-X in each of the following years.

Ms Spottiswoode, director general of gas supply, said the curbs would mean £40 off average domestic gas bills next year and a reduction of £40-£50 by the end of the five-year period. Industrial and commercial

companies could make savings ranging from £600 a year for small firms to £40,000 a year for a company with an annual gas bill of £500,000.

However, British Gas chairman Richard Giordano, questioned whether any of the price reductions would feed through to end customers and suggested that they more likely to widen the profit margins of independent suppliers competing with British Gas when the domestic market is opened to full competition in 1998.

The regulator said the proposals "represent a fair balance between the interests of consumers and the interests of shareholders", adding that the targets were challenging but achievable.

But British Gas said the proposals represented "the seizure of shareholders' income on an unprecedented scale" and could undermine confidence in the entire regulatory system while putting at risk the safety, reliability and efficiency of TransCo's

transportation system. The gulf between the two sides makes an MMC referral look inevitable. Philip Rogers, British Gas's deputy chairman, said it was now "highly probable" that it would reject Ofgas's proposals, triggering an automatic inquiry by the MMC at the end of July. He denied, however, that this would compromise the planned demerger of TransCo and British Gas Energy into separate quoted companies next March. Ofgas said TransCo had scope to achieve a 4 per cent productivity gains a year to compensate for the lower revenues it will be allowed.

The new formula also cuts the amount of depreciation British Gas can charge a year and the return shareholders are able to earn by lowering the value of TransCo's assets from their present £1.8bn to £9bn-£11bn.

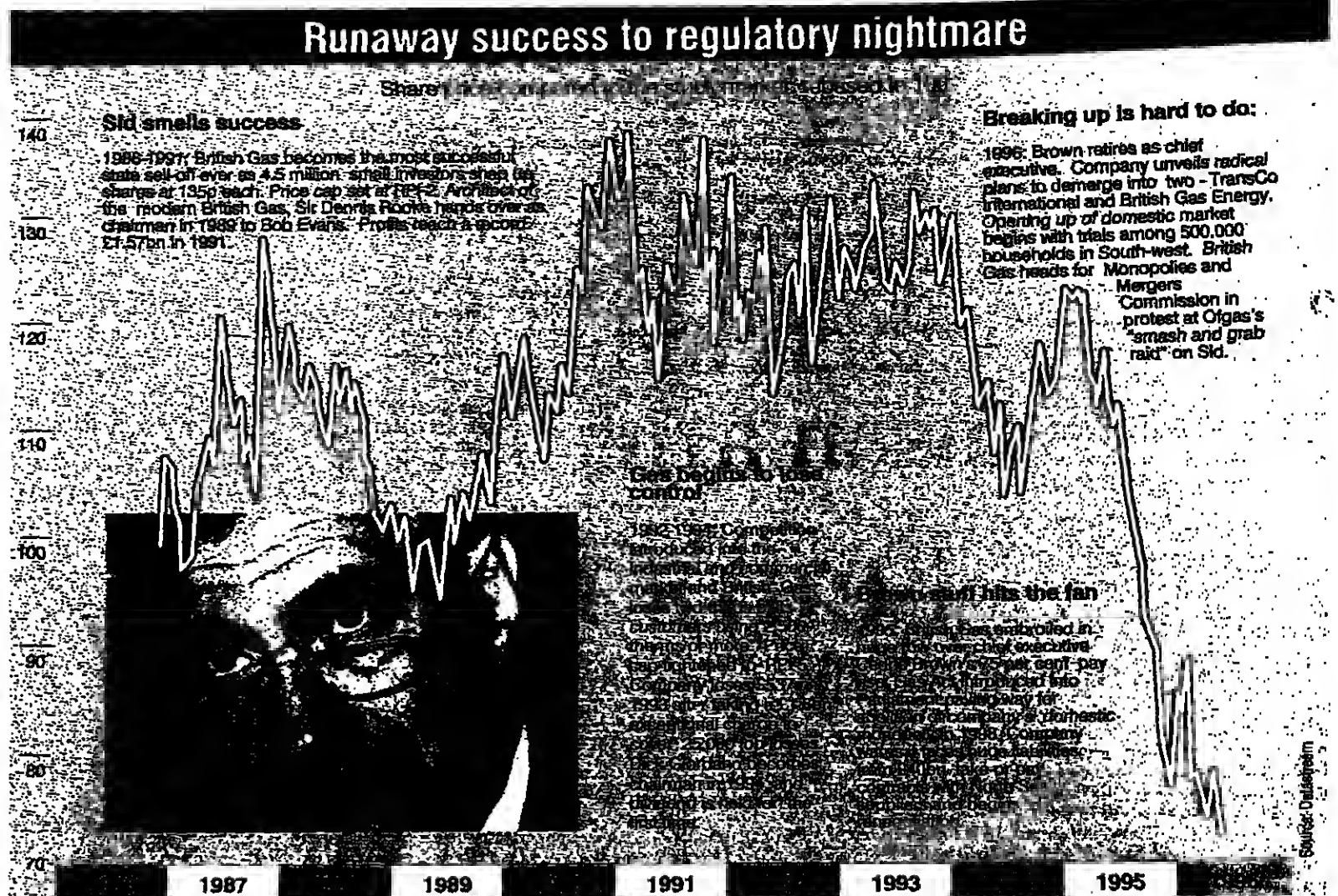
British Gas said it did not accept Ofgas's proposals nor the basis on which they were calculated and took a swipe at both Ms Spottiswoode and Ofgas's consultants, accountants Coopers and Lybrand and consulting engineers WS Atkins, for their lack of understanding of business.

There is a mechanism in the formula to correct for under-spending or over-spending on capital expenditure - an area where Ofgas says TransCo has been over-estimating forecasts by 30 per cent. But Ofgas has rejected proposals put forward by British Gas for profit sharing of any excess gains it might make between TransCo and the 40 shippers who use its pipeline network.

Comment, page 17



'A fair balance': Claire Spottiswoode of Ofgas



You should have listened to us, says Sid

NIC CICUTTI

The collapse in British Gas's share price was greeted with resignation by some small shareholders, also known as Sids, yesterday. However, many insisted on blaming the company for its past refusal to listen to their complaints.

Others claimed that despite the 27p drop in share prices, down to 201p, most of the com-

pany's 1.7 million shareholders would still be better off if the price of gas falls for domestic users.

The Reverend Dennis Nadin, of Harlow, Essex, who was at last year's stormy British Gas annual meeting, said: "This is good news for the consumer, which is my primary concern. Small shareholders, such as myself, will benefit more from the cut in prices than we would

have gained if share prices had remained as they are."

"Large shareholders have only themselves to blame for what has happened. They refused to back us in attempting to control the behaviour of the directors last year."

Mr Nadin admitted that he was a somewhat untypical shareholder. "I bought the smallest amount of shares I was entitled to back in 1986 to band

them back in the event of the Labour Party deciding to re-nationalise British Gas."

"Since then, I have held on to the shares to argue for a greater measure of accountability among all public utilities."

Joseph Lamb, a retired physiology professor at St Andrews University, in Scotland, led a 2,000-strong small shareholder revolt at last year's AGM. He said: "I think the whole thing

has been badly handled. Personally, I blame Richard Giordano. All the problems appear to have started since he became chairman."

Professor Lamb said that soon after the AGM, his wife Bridget Cook had sold 2,000 British Gas shares she owned for 290p each: "I felt that since I had contributed to the problem that I should keep the 400 I owned."

Bank hedges bets on inflation

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

The Bank of England will say in its Inflation Report today that the Government remains more likely than not to hit its 2.5 per cent inflation target. But it will also emphasise early warning signals such as higher costs, stronger consumer spending and rapid monetary growth.

The report follows official figures yesterday showing that inflation at the factory gate fell last month to its lowest since December 1994.

However, higher oil and food costs meant the price of some materials bought by manufacturers picked up sharply.

There was also new evidence confirming the stronger trend in retail sales, especially for housing-related items such as furniture and carpets.

April's figures were hit by the early Easter, according to the British Retail Consortium, but annual growth in the volume of retail sales taking March and April together was 4.4 per cent against an average of 4 per cent during the winter months.

Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, said yesterday that inflationary pressures remained subdued.

Most City of London analysts agreed. Simon Briscoe, an economist at Nikko Securities, said: "The downward trend in output prices is very encouraging for retail price inflation over the next year or so."

Evidence on the strength of the economy since the Bank's February Inflation Report has been mixed. Ahead of retail prices for April due later this week, the Bank is expected to forecast that the target measure of inflation will fall further in the short run but that the risks of higher inflation in the medium term have increased.

Yesterday's producer price figures confirmed that manufacturers have been unable to pass on cost increases. Their output prices rose 0.3 per cent in April, reducing their year-on-year increase to 3.2 per cent from 3.5 per cent. "Core" prices, excluding food, drink and tobacco and petroleum, rose 0.1 per cent, taking their annual inflation rate down to 2.8 per cent.

The monthly increase in input costs was disappointingly high at 0.8 per cent, mainly because of higher prices for crude oil, grains and cocoa.

The 12-month rate of growth increased from 2.8 per cent to 3.1 per cent.

Core input prices rose 0.3 per cent in April but fell 0.3 per cent in year-on-year terms, leading some economists to argue that

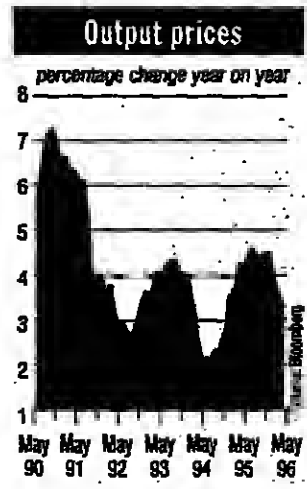
there were no worrying inflationary implications. They see dearer oil and food, which make up nearly a third of the index of manufacturers' input prices, as temporary.

However, others were more concerned about the potential impact on inflation further down the pipeline. Michael Dicks at investment bank Lehman Brothers said: "There are latent cost pressures. If demand strengthens we will see firms passing them on."

The financial markets reckon there is no scope for another reduction in base rates from the current level of 6 per cent.

Mr George said long-term interest rates in the UK would fall if the Bank of England had explicit responsibility for keeping prices stable. That was more important than independence, he argued.

In an interview with French financial daily *La Tribune* yesterday he said: "That would improve the credibility of monetary policy, which would have an impact on long-term yields, because we would not take any risks."



Standard Life set to sell £1bn stake in BoS

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

The Bank of Scotland was put into play yesterday as Standard Life, Britain's biggest life mutual, announced it is considering selling its 32.5 per cent stake. A relatively muted 14p rise in the bank's share price to 252.5p suggested the market believed the near £1bn stake would be placed among institutions.

But there was also speculation that several big UK banks that had previously expressed interest in doing a deal with Bank of Scotland would now be dusting off their dossiers. Both HSBC and Barclays are understood to have made informal expressions of interest over the past year to BoS.

Standard Life said it is reviewing its stake because it has become too large for its investment portfolio.

"Standard Life continues to have confidence in Bank of Scotland's future prospects and strategies, but we nevertheless believe it could be in the

interests of our policyholders to rebalance our equity portfolio by realising some or all of our stake in Bank of Scotland," said Scott Bell, managing director of Standard Life.

It is also assumed, given the pressures for consolidation in the life mutual sector, that the Scottish giant is getting its books in order for any strategic moves it may decide to make. Standard Life has appointed Lazarus to advise on the sale, while the Bank of Scotland is being advised by Schroders.

Standard Life initially bought the 32.5 per cent stake in Bank of Scotland from Barclays in 1985, paying the equivalent of about £250m. It is now worth approaching £1bn, and accounts for about 7 per cent of Standard Life's UK equity portfolio.

Initially there had been hopes that the investment would provide the basis for closer commercial co-operation. This never bore fruit, leaving a purely financial investment which Standard Life decided is too large.

INTEREST RATE CHANGE			
Investment and Savings			
With effect from 14th May 1996, the interest rates for the following share and deposit accounts will be:			
Type of Account	Gross % p.a.	Type of Account	Gross % p.a.
SPECIAL 85		HIGH RISE (Closed Index)	
85 days notice	5.25	HIGH RISE (DEPOSIT) ACCOUNT	
£100,000 and over	5.25	Instant access	4.20
C.A.R. 1	5.25	£25,000 to £49,999	5.00
£50,000 to £99,999	5.11	£100,000 to £24,999	2.00
C.A.R. 1	5.11	£25,000 to £49,999	1.75
£100,000 to £24,999	4.60	£50,000 to £49,999	1.20
C.A.R. 1	4.60	£50,000 to £49,999	1.00
£25,000 to £49,999	4.25	£100,000 to £49,999	0.50
C.A.R. 1	4.25		
£50,000 to £99,999	3.25	REDAUNT SAVINGS BOND	
C.A.R. 1	3.25	(Closed Index)	
£100,000 to £49,999	2.75	REDAUNT (DEPOSIT) ACCOUNT	
C.A.R. 1	2.75	Instant access	4.75
	2.80	£25,000 and over	4.75
		£50,000 and over	5.00
POSTMASTER (Closed Index)		£100,000 and over	4.75
Instant access by post	5.45	£25,000 to £49,999	3.00
£100,000 and over	5.15	£100,000 to £24,999	2.00
£50,000 to £99,999	5.00	£25,000 to £49,999	1.75
£100,000 to £24,999	4.75	£50,000 to £49,999	1.20
£25,000 to £49,999	4.05	£50,000 to £49,999	1.00
POSTMASTER only	4.05	£100,000 to £49,999	0.50
£100,000 to £49,999	4.05		
		MONTHLY INCOME ACCOUNT	
TOP 85 (Closed Index)		7 days notice	5.25
£25,000 and over	5.25	£25,000 and over	4.99
85 days notice	5.10	£100,000 to £24,999	4.25
£100,000 and over	5.10	(Rates include 0.5% bonus)	
£50,000 to £99,999	5.00	INVESTMENT SHARE ACCOUNT	
£100,000 to £49,999	4.25	Instant access	3.00
£25,000 to £49,999	3.00	£25,000 to £49,999	2.25
£50,000 to £49,999	2.25	£100,000 to £49,999	2.00
£100,000 to £49,999	2.00		
TOP 85 only			
£25,000 to £49,999	1.75		

The interest rates on all other accounts will remain unchanged, except where individual notification is made. Interest will be paid registration. Otherwise interest will be paid after deduction of income tax at the appropriate rate.

† Gross Compounded Annual Rate where the interest is reinvested in the account monthly.

* If the capital balance in the account is below or falls below the minimum initial investment, interest will be payable at the standard interest rate for the Investment Share Account (excluding bonus) for so long as the capital balance remains below the minimum.

§ If the balance in your account is less than £100 for a period of 3 consecutive months or more, a charge of £1 per quarter will be debited to your account. This charge does not apply to any account held by an investor under 18 years of age.

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STOCK MARKETS			
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)
FTSE 100	3739.20	-15.20	-0.4
FTSE 250	4512.40	-0.40	-0.0
FTSE 350	1897.10	-6.00	-0.3
FT Small Cap	2228.52	+4.17	+0.2
FT All Share	1882.84	-5.21	-0.3
New York	5528.20	+10.16	+0.2
Tokyo	21171.82	-348.30	-1.2
Hong Kong	10746.00	+148.27	+1.4
Frankfurt	2496.17	+27.39	+1.1

INTEREST RATES			
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term
UK 6M	6.00	6.24	8.04
UK 12M	5.34	5.81	6.75
Japan	0.44	1.13	2.47
Germany	3.31	3.28	6.59
Headline Index	6.59	6.59	7.17
MAIN PRICE CHANGES			
Index	Price	Change	% Change
Bk of Scotland	252.5	14	5.9
British Gas	201	27	11.8
Barclays	805	35	4.5
Wimpey (George)	142	5	3.4

CURRENCIES			
Index	Yesterday	Day's change	% change
£/US\$	1.5141	-0.0050	-0.33
£/DM	1.5145	-0.0020	-0.13
DM/£	2.3220	+0.0030	+0.13
¥/£	168.935	-1.498	-0.88
£/¥	64.4	0.3	0.41
OTHER INDICATORS			
Index	Yesterday	Day's change	% change
Oil Brent \$	19.23	+0.25	1.3
Gold \$	391.40	-0.90	-0.23
Gold £	256.50	+0.78	0.3

Source: FT Information

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business

You simply can't have your sweeties and eat them



'Should we be feeling sorry for the army of Sids drafted into this Thatcherite experiment in popular capitalism in the mid-1980s? We've been conned, many will be saying after the spectacular fall in the British Gas share price of the last few years. But have they?'

As Britain's most hated company (it's official, apparently), few will shed a tear for poor old British Gas even after the latest savaging from the gas regulator, Clare Spottiswoode. But should we be feeling sorry for the army of Sids drafted into this Thatcherite experiment in popular capitalism in the mid-1980s? We've been conned, many of them will be saying after the spectacular fall in the British Gas share price of the last few years. But have they?

Certainly a very good case can be made for saying that the original privatisation prospectus was a false one. What British Gas has become bears little resemblance to what was actually sold to investors back in 1986. Furthermore, the regulatory and competitive environment has been changed far more swiftly and radically than might have been anticipated then. On the other hand, nothing is for ever in this world and it was perhaps unreasonable of investors to have believed British Gas or the environment in which it operates would remain unchanged.

The reality is that British Gas has actually followed the path that all utility privatisations are meant to. Possibly it has been a somewhat accelerated one, but the glide-path is exactly as it should have been. With the benefit of hindsight, it is obvious that the company was sold on terms which were far too generous to investors and did not adequately address the interests of customers. The result of this was that in the early years, shareholders enjoyed quite spectacular

returns. In part this was deliberate - British Gas was underpriced to sell and thereby buy Tory votes. But there was also dramatic and to some extent unanticipated scope for improvement in the bloated tariff and cost structure inherited from the state. For a while, British Gas and its shareholders made hay at the expense of their customers. If utility regulation works as it should, then this apparent imbalance is addressed at the time of the periodic price review when customers get to claim the efficiency gains achieved over the previous five years.

That is precisely what is now happening and what was always meant to happen at British Gas. Taking the total return to shareholders including dividend payments since privatisation, British Gas outperformed the rest of the stock market quite nicely until a year ago. During that time the stock market has risen dramatically. Across the lifetime of privatised British Gas, then, investors have enjoyed a good, if un spectacular, return, relative to other shares and a fantastically good one relative to other "low-risk" investments. Far from being poor, the returns have actually been really quite remarkable given the type of company British Gas is. Furthermore, the underperformance of the past year has been caused as much by the company's disastrous take-or-pay gas contracts as by the prospect of regulatory crackdown.

What Ms Spottiswoode is now proposing is to reduce that overly generous rate of

return to a more appropriate level. Shareholders are not being subjected to the "biggest smash and grab ever", one of the more ridiculous of the one-liners dreamt up by British Gas's army of spin doctors to describe yesterday's proposals. They are, however, having some of the privilege of monopoly removed from them. There is no doubting that it hurts when your sweeties are taken away, but it is hardly the same as being conned.

The same fate has already overtaken BT. Over the years ahead water, electricity, and, yes, Railtrack, too, will go the same way. As the regulator, and in some industries competition, begin to bite, the spectacular returns of the early years give way to more pedestrian ones.

For those of us who condemned Professor Stephen Littlechild for being too lax on the regional electricity industry, it is hard to summon up much support for British Gas. When a company screams this loud, it generally means the regulator must have got it about right. British Gas is unlikely to get much joy out of the MMC.

Don't bet your shirt on the market

Nobody rings a bell when the market turns, and we have had no more success than anyone else at calling the top of this cycle. We would be the first to admit our scepti-

cism was premature, but it would take a herculean effort to see the current resilience of the market as anything other than the flag-end of a bull run.

Many of the anecdotal signs of a peak are now in place: enthusiasm for blue-sky investments, no more clearly exemplified than by the imminent arrival in the FT-SE 100 index of the substantially loss-making British Biotech; heavily oversubscribed flotations and first day premiums, a classic indicator of stockmarket froth; a boom in unit trust sales, which means private investors are now pouring more than £1bn a month into the market; and strong commodity prices, suggesting investors on the lookout for a safe haven.

There are some good reasons for not panicking. Bids, which have already reached £100 this year, comparing well with last year's bumper £37bn total, look set to continue in the short term despite the best efforts of Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade. The next year could provide a last window of opportunity and merchant banks are heaving away on proposals while it remains open.

The UK market has also underperformed markedly in recent months, compared with both the Dow and other European bourses, providing some scope for relative recovery. Consumer spending is showing encouraging signs of life, the housing market is picking up and recovery in Europe means the outlook for exports is better than for some time.

The bear case looks more and more compelling, however. While not desperately overstretched, the market looks as highly rated on a basket of key valuation measures as at any time since the last serious jitters in 1989. It is normally right to worry when the market is yielding less than 4 per cent, even if in a low-inflation world that represents a decent return.

Other factors that will hold shares back this year are: the high number of gilt redemptions that will divert the overseas cash that might otherwise have flowed into the equity market; an increasingly nervy Wall Street; as good growth in the US economy puts pressure on American interest rates; and the dwindling prospect of a base rate cut now if that would run the risk of a politically damaging uptick in the cost of money ahead of an election.

On top of all this, we have news, courtesy of a Gallup poll, for Merrill Lynch, of a worrying switch by UK fund managers out of equities into property and index-linked gilts. According to the survey, a balance of 35 per cent of respondents are planning to reduce their exposure to equities, a marked shift in sentiment over the last month.

The highest concern, however, is political risk, which the most bearish analysts believe could wipe 15 per cent from the market's current level if foreign investors take fright. Sell in May and go away has hardly earned its keep as a reliable stockmarket saw in recent times. This could well be its year.

Bae to back bid for Thomson after missile alliance

MICHAEL HARRISON and CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY

British Aerospace is set to back a joint bid for the state-owned French defence electronics group Thomson-CSF following the announcement yesterday of a £1bn tie-up with another French group, the missile producer Matra Hachette.

The announcement came on the eve of president Jacques Chirac's state visit to Britain today and marks a further stage in Anglo-French defence co-operation following GEC Marconi's link-up on sonars with Thomson.

Bae is to pool its own missiles division, Bae Dynamics, with those of Matra to create Europe's biggest missile supplier with combined sales of £1bn a year and 6,000 employees. The new grouping will provide a powerful European competitor to US groups such as Lockheed Martin which merged last year.

France's Aerospace and Daimler-Benz Aerospace of Germany combined their missile businesses six months ago. As part of the deal Bae has also agreed to "support" plans by Matra's parent company, Lagardere, to acquire a majority

shareholding when Thomson-CSF is privatised.

A Bae spokesman said this could involve financial backing. Bae's interest is in combining some of Thomson-CSF's missile operations into the new Anglo-French joint venture with Matra.

The new company, to be called Matra Bae Dynamics, will be owned 50-50 and will have a British chairman and a French chief executive. It will be registered in France.

Bae is to pay the joint company £50m to £110m over the next four years dependent on the level of orders it captures. The payment reflects the slightly larger size of Matra Hachette which accounts for about 60 per cent of the combined turnover.

Bae's dynamics business is based in Stevenage, Bristol and Luton and employs just under 3,000 people. Matra employs a further 3,000 in France.

The two companies are already teamed on the Casom project - a air-launched cruise missile flying at just under the speed of sound with a range of 250 km - for the Ministry of Defence. The missile is known as the Storm Shadow, and is a variant of Matra's Apache.

Matra and Bae are also partners in the consortium supplying the Future Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile, called the Meteor, for the Eurofighter. The Meteor is a ramjet-powered missile, flying at three to four times the speed of sound and able to destroy enemy planes at 50 miles. The contract may be worth up to £90m.

Bae's product range includes the Rapier ground to air missile, the Trigat anti-tank missile and the Asram advanced short-range air-to-air missile being supplied to the MoD. It also makes two naval missiles - the Sea Wolf which is used to arm Royal Navy frigates and the Sea Skua anti-ship missile.

The Matra range includes the Mica family of air-to-air missiles, the Apache air-to-ground missile, the Mistral surface-to-air missile and the Miles torpedo.

The two companies have been negotiating a merger of their missile businesses for nearly two years and the deal still needs UK and French government and regulatory approval. Provided that is forthcoming it will be the first of the European defence alliances that Bae chief executive Dick Evans has been seeking.

Make-or-break Apple cuts model range



Getting down to core products: Apple chief executive Gilbert Amelio

DAVID USBORNE
New York

Apple Computer is cutting its model range in half to about 20 and reducing the number of operating systems it sells from six to one in another drastic attempt to cut costs and revive its fortunes.

The new strategy, regarded by many analysts as a make-or-break moment for the once-mighty-but-now-hobbled computer company, was announced yesterday by its recently installed chief executive, Gilbert Amelio, at a conference of software developers in California.

In one glimmer of good news, Mr Amelio told the developers that sales of Apple products rose by 40 per cent in April over March. Shares in Apple were unchanged at midday yesterday at \$27.25 after Mr Amelio's comments.

Mr Amelio took over at Apple in February after the ousting of his predecessor, Michael Spindler. At the time, the company was in deep crisis, having just announced a quarterly loss of \$69m and plans to lay off 1,300 staff. Squashed by the increasing market domination of the Windows standard, combining Microsoft's Windows operating system with Intel's chip technology, it had seen its world PC market share drop to 7 per cent.

Since his arrival, Mr Amelio has weathered the announcement of a subsequent quarterly loss of \$740m - the worst in the company's history - which included a large inventory write-down, while he has moved to sell

a manufacturing plant in Colorado and to eliminate another 1,000 jobs.

So intently anticipated was Mr Amelio's speech that some observers were comparing it to the introduction in 1984 of the first easy-to-use personal computer with the Macintosh operating system. That transformed Apple into America's number one PC manufacturer.

Under Mr Amelio, the company has also signalled its intention to focus intently on developing products to make it easier for consumers to explore and use the Internet.

"I have a vision for this company, I have a dream, if you will - to bring computing to rest of us," Mr Amelio told yesterday's conference, noting that global sales of computers are expected to double by the end of the millennium.

Mr Amelio said he intended to cut the number of models made by Apple by 50 per cent over the next 12 months. Meanwhile, by paring the number of Apple operating systems from six to just one, he said he hopes to focus all of the company's energies on the Mac system.

Through his cost-cutting strategy, Mr Amelio signalled that he expected to be able to make Apple profitable again on a total revenue of \$9bn, compared with the \$11bn in revenue generated by sales in 1995.

Mr Amelio is also accelerating Apple's slow change of heart in agreeing to allow other manufacturers to clone Apple systems under licensing agreements.

Bosses fear Labour crackdown on councils

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

The number of companies forced to establish European works councils will double under a Labour government, according to employers' leaders.

Some 300 UK-based multinationals will be covered by the Brussels directive, compared with the present 150 because a Blair administration is expected to sign up to the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty.

The full impact of Labour policy will surprise British companies, many of which are strongly suspicious of works

councils, and could damage Mr Blair's attempts to make his party appear business-friendly.

Peter Reid, an employment law specialist at the federation, yesterday pointed out that under the Social Chapter British workers would be included in the count to decide whether firms were big enough to be covered by the directive. All companies with 1,000 staff in the European Union with at least 150 in each of two countries have to set up legally backed structures to consult and inform employees. At the moment only workers in Continental EU countries are used in the calculation.

Mr Reid said that while Britain was currently third in the league table of European economies affected by the law, Labour policy would put the UK at the top because of the existence of a large number of medium-sized firms.

The federation yesterday pointed out that there were just 100 working days left before companies which met the present conditions could establish a voluntary structure. After 22 September, UK-based multinationals will have to enter legally backed negotiations to establish the structures.

If a company refuses to co-operate, then employee repre-

sentatives can apply for a council to be established within six months of the deadline.

Genuine negotiations prove fruitless, a works council structure will be imposed in September 1999.

In informal contacts with the Labour Party Mr Reid believes he has won assurances that companies would be given a fresh deadline to reach a voluntary agreement. The federation has asked for a "breathing space" of up to two years.

A future Labour government would also have to introduce its own laws on how negotiations should take place and the exact structure of works

councils. Till then companies can opt to be "headquartered" for the purpose of works council legislation in any country it found the most favourable.

Under the status quo, German laws were among the most strict, providing for imprisonment where there was unconstitutional interference with the business of works councils. The law in Ireland appeared to be the most liberal.

The federation official said that some British businesses were facing a "very messy" time after 22 September. He estimated that some 20 companies did not appreciate the full impact of the legislation.

ITV companies launch ad blitz

MATTHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

ITV companies yesterday unveiled a television and press marketing campaign worth as much as £30m, in an effort to see off commercial competitors and to attract new viewers.

The campaign marks a step toward much closer co-operation among ITV companies, which have squabbled in the past over issues such as scheduling, production and advertising share. It follows co-operation last week that the ITV companies will also develop common plans for the launch of digital television services.

Launching the marketing

campaign, Steve Morrison, managing director of LWT and chairman of the ITV Marketing Group, said: "We are out to show that ITV is the most popular television channel in Europe."

Developed by M&C Saatchi, the campaign comprises six new 60-second TV adverts, the first of which was launched on ITV last night. In addition, ten 10-second commercials will be peppered throughout the schedule from now until the end of the year.

The adverts feature well-known ITV personalities extolling the virtues of other network programmes. Jack and Vera, from *Coronation Street*, wax poetic about the *South*

Bank Show, while two regulars from *Gladiators* debate the relative merits of contemporary and costume dramas.

The television campaign represents about £20m worth of ITV air time. The ITV companies are also spending £5m on press and trade advertisements, posters and some special "multimedia" events. All adverts will include the ITV-3 logo and the words, "Britain's most popular button."

The commercial broadcaster has angered advertisers by pushing rates higher year on year, despite declining audiences and a bitter battle for viewers with the BBC and Channel 4.

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business

Eager Beazer puts faith in Church

Beazer Homes' £35.7m deal to buy Charles Church, the all-but-failed-up-market housebuilder, looks pricey on the face of it. Now the UK's third-largest builder, Beazer believes it has done well to pick up such a good name for a mere £3m in goodwill and in just the area of the market where it has stated its intention to expand.

But that goodwill calculation would have been higher had Beazer not increased the value its puts on Church's assets. It also assumes that the £9.8m value ascribed to the 6,500 plots with out planning permission in its "strategic" land bank is anywhere near accurate.

Whether those values are right or wrong, the short-term returns on the sale look set to accrue to the Royal Bank of Scotland rather than Beazer. The bank converted from being the group's leading lender to its owner in February after buying out the nine other banks in the lending consortium in a deal worth £13.6m. Even adding back the £14.5m in (written-down) loans it had sunk into Church, the Royal Bank appears to have made a decent turn on yesterday's sale.

By the same token, Beazer is not buying the same group which in the 1980s was a by-word for luxury homes in the South-east of England. The sudden death of its eponymous founder in 1989, combined with five years or so of recession, have clearly taken their toll on Charles Church. At its peak in 1988, the group sold 575 houses at around £500,000 apiece to return profits of £18m. By contrast, in the year to last August Church sold 193 units and made £4.1m before interest charges of around £3m, and Beazer concedes that trading has deteriorated somewhat since then. Perhaps the most telling feature of the group's decline is that the average selling price had tumbled to £180,000 by last year.

That said, Beazer's contention that the past should be no guide to the future carries some weight. The deal, which it claims will be earnings-enhancing, includes a three-year landbank and a company making an operating margin of 11.8 per cent, well up with the best in the industry and Beazer's own margins.

More importantly, despite its decline in recent years, the brand name remains strong in the South-east and should provide a strong platform for Beazer's ambitions to roll it out across the country. The aim over the next four to five years is to grow Church back to the level where it is again building between 500 and 600 houses a year. And as the rich get richer, this area of the market should see significant growth

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

in the future. In the meantime, though, the shares, unchanged at 195p, are up with events on a forward p/e of 16 until the outlook for the housing market becomes clearer.

Game-over time at Kunick

Investors in gaming machine operator Kunick have been on a winning streak since the sale of half its nursing homes associate Goldborough eased the debt burden by £30m. Anybody brave enough then to buy shares at their all-time low of 3p is now showing a 1,000 per cent return.

The launch of the National Lottery threatened to reverse their run of luck until new gaming laws were introduced. The new rules raised the prize limit on one-arm bandits in pubs and amusement arcades from £6 to £8 in tokens. All-cash fruit machines are being installed from July.

But it was the prospect of Kunick tapping into Britain's 9,000 betting shops

that has sustained interest in Kunick's shares, which almost doubled in the last year. Bookmakers will be able to install two machines in each shop when the new rules come in this summer.

With 16 per cent of the country's 200,000 fruit machines, Kunick looked well-placed to take advantage of a market analysts reckoned could generate £1m extra profit for every 3,000 new machines.

Kunick, though, now says it is not going to chase market share when bookies install up to 15,000 machines. Chief executive Russell Smith insists Kunick will have "a decent representation" but it will not take on loss-making betting shop contracts.

He may be right, but unless analysts overestimated the size of this market, Kunick's more hawkish stance suggests it is struggling in the face of tough competition from the likes of Leisure Machine Services, the Bass-owned market leader.

The cost of upgrading existing machines was one reason why interim pre-tax profits released yesterday fell from £7.5m to £4.0m, though the main culprit was the absence of a £3.9m ex-

ceptional gain taken last year when Kunick sold 50 per share of its French nursing homes business.

Brokers have pencilled in pre-tax profits of about £10m, implying a p/e ratio of 20 falling to 16 next year if £11.7m is made. The shares fell yesterday 0.75p to 30.25p and are likely to slip lower now that the de-regulation story appears, for the time being, to have run its course. Take profits.

Fair MAID not for faint hearts

MAID, the on-line business information group run by Dan Wagner, 31, is riding the crest of the Internet wave. In an eventful two years on the stock market, its shares have risen from the 100p issue price to 25p while the market capitalisation has soared to £240m. This is quite an achievement for a company that racked up sales of less than £10m last year and is forecast to make losses of £3.7m in 1996.

The value is based on MAID's impressive technological know-how, which it harnesses to supply business information such as newspaper cuttings, market research and news wire services to a growing subscriber base. It doesn't own the copyright of this information but has developed systems that sort and package it in a way few rivals can match. Given the vast mass of information available on the Internet, that is an important selling point.

MAID's position in the market is strong if not impregnable. It has 10 years of experience in the field, giving it a significant head-start on many rivals. Yesterday's first-quarter figures were broadly as expected, with a dive into the red as MAID invests in new sales offices and a larger sales force. Losses of £1.4m in the three months to the end of March compared with £211,000 profits in 1995. Sales were 60 per cent ahead at £4.5m. Subscriber revenue almost doubled to £2.2m.

The company has also been busy signing up deals with IBM to supply electronic business intelligence and with Forte to provide hotel guests with access to the Internet.

As with biotech stocks, the other stockmarket flavour of the month, rating companies like MAID is more art than science and all about taking a bet on unquantifiable potential. Broker Charles Stanley is forecasting losses of £3.7m this year turning into profits of £12.6m in 1997. A good long-term prospect but, as with all technology stocks, not for the faint-hearted.

An awarding day sends spin doctors into a whirl

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK



Sir David Simon: Businessman of the Year

Hectic scenes yesterday as Sir David Simon, chairman of BP, picked up the prestigious KPMG Businessman of the Year award. At lunch time the press office at accountants KPMG had to pick up an award of their own first - the Public Relations Award of Excellence, for their leadership programme with rugby hero Will Carling.

The spin doctors then had to charge across London from the Intercontinental Hotel to the Savoy, where industry grandees such as Sir Colin Marshall of British Airways were waiting to present their award to Sir David. Everything went off smoothly, including the after lunch speech by Peter Mandelson, Labour MP for Hartlepool and no mean spin doctor himself.

No doubt Gordon Brown's accusation a fortnight ago that accountants like KPMG were "peddling lies" about Labour's tax plans was long forgotten.

Embattled Ken Clarke stuck up two fingers at the Euro-sceptic right wing of the Conservative Party yesterday by recruiting two new special advisers to Treasury ministers - one from the BBC and one from the European Parliament.

It is hard to decide which will cause most frothing at the mouth by the Gorman Tendency. Anthony Trusdale has been appointed as Special Adviser to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and

Forget Sid, the most enthusiastic private shareholder in the world must surely be Nicolae, his Romanian counterpart. Over 95 per cent of the adult population have opted to invest directly in companies via Romania's Mass Privatisation Programme. All citizens over 18 were given coupons to invest, and could opt for five-year investment funds or direct investment. The subscription period has just closed and the figures for investing in one firm have exceeded all expectations. Nicolae will trade his shares on a Nasdaq-style system. I hope he knows that shares can go down as well as up.

joins the Conservatives in the European Parliament, where he was Senior Policy Adviser and previously Head of their London Office.

Paul Gardner has been appointed as Special Adviser to the Rt Hon William Waldegrave, MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Gardner joins from the BBC's *On the Record* programme. Good luck chaps - you'll need it.

ITV were leaving nothing to chance last night with their live interview of OJ Simpson. All the questions put by Granada TV's Richard and Judy were prepared by an unimpeachable outside expert - Gary Solis, legal affairs adviser with ITV's arch rivals Sky News. They'll have Rupert Murdoch reading *News at Ten* next.

There was wry laughter from workers in London's Canary Wharf yesterday, the *Independent* amongst them, when the four organisations chosen to tender for the franchise to the Docklands Light Railway were announced. The DLR, Canary Wharf's main link with central London, has become a byword for delays. At the moment it receives revenues of £9m a year against £23m costs. One of the potential franchisees is Docklands Area Rapid Transit, a joint venture between Go-Ahead Group and VIA GTI. If they can make the DLR truly "rapid" they will have performed a miracle.

Asbestosis ruling poses new setback for T&N

MAGNUS GRIMMOND

T&N, the engineering group, has suffered a new blow in its attempt to put a cap on its multi-million pound asbestos liabilities after a US court upheld an appeal against a class action settlement reached in 1994.

The ruling, coming just after the appeal court in London extended T&N's liabilities on this side of the Atlantic, represents the second setback in six weeks for the group, which was once one

of the world's largest asbestos groups.

The shares plunged 13p to 162p yesterday, wiping nearly £70m from the group's market value.

T&N has already paid out over £350m in asbestos claims over the past 11 years, of which over £300m has gone to individual victims in the US. The latest ruling threatens the so-called Georgine settlement reached by the Center for Claims Resolution, a co-operative involving 20 asbestos

groups of which T&N is a member, which had attempted to cap those liabilities by creating a judicially approved framework for settling out of court the tens of thousands of claims for asbestos-related diseases coming forward every year in the United States.

Last Friday's successful appeal on procedural matters threatens to bring claims back into the courts by lifting the injunction that requires all claimants to use the settlement procedures. T&N has yet to decide what to do next. It has 21 days to mount an appeal against the ruling and it is understood that a high-level representative of the company has flown to New York to meet other members of the CCR to discuss their next move.

A source at the company said yesterday that their legal advice was that there were good grounds for challenging the judgment. But he admitted that the ruling was a setback.

The main idea was to stop lawyers making a lot of money

and for people to get paid more quickly. The latest judgment meant that future claims would be more costly than under Georgine and there would be more of them, he said.

"I think what you will see is a greater number because there will be a number of scurrilous claims and the legal cost will be higher because we will have to eliminate those."

Sandy Morris, engineering analyst at NatWest Markets, said the decision meant "a lot of good effort and hard work

had been undone... the sums may not rise materially, but what poor old T&N needed was an end to uncertainty."

He said the one glimmer of hope was that the ruling had not relied on constitutional ground of a denial of human rights. However, the latest news along with worries about the car market into which it sells many of its products were likely to cause him to downgrade his profits forecast for this year from £135m to between £125m and £130m.

Richards shares dive on warning

NIGEL COPE

Shares in Richards Group, the Birmingham-based specialist engineer, plunged more than 20 per cent yesterday when the company warned of a "substantial" pre-tax loss for the year to December.

It also announced the withdrawal of the dividend and "certain accounting errors" in its accounts. Finance director Nicholas Morgan offered his resignation which has been accepted with immediate effect.

Richards, which makes steel support systems used in bridges and power stations, reported profits of £276,000 last year and was expected to increase profit to around £400,000 this time. The shares fell 8p to 25p on the news.

The company said that during the audit of the year-end accounts, the company was made aware of certain accounting errors which led to the management accounts being overstated.

The errors primarily relate to costs used in the contracting

and access flooring business where the reported margins were much higher than those actually earned.

Though Richards made profits of £1.4m in 1990, its performance has been patchy since. It has made only negligible profits since 1992.

Recently it has achieved some success in the export market, selling steel supports to the Far East and Pakistan. Last year the company reported tripled profits of £276,000, helped by improved confidence in the engineering sector and a 32 per cent increase in exports at the engineering business.

The company also said that the proposed landfill tax which was unveiled in the last Budget had led to an increase in inquiries from the foundry industry about its thermal reclamation technology.

It is the second time in three years that shareholders have suffered a dramatic cut in the dividend. In 1993 the company slashed the pay-out from 4.4p to 2.25p, blaming the recession.

Another 570 go at Yarrow yard

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

Yarrow Shipbuilders on the Clyde is to lose 570 jobs over the next three months, bringing the total reduction since the start of the year to about 1,000.

Yarrow blamed the new job losses on a gap in the order book, despite the fact that the yard won a £400m order in February from the Ministry of Defence to build three Type 23 frigates.

When the redundancy programme was first unveiled in February ahead of the announcement of the Type 23 order, the company blithely said that 1,000 jobs or more might have to go unless the Type 23 came to Yarrow.

But now the threatened total has been reached even with the order in place.

A spokesman for Yarrow said today: "We always said there would be a second batch of redundancies. We thought that would be in April, we have managed to hold it off until May."

Of the total to go, 490 man-

ual workers and 80 staff and managerial employees are affected, mainly from the production side.

The workforce at the yard will have reduced from 2,900 at the beginning of the year to 1,900 in three months' time. A Yarrow spokesman said: "In the longer term we'd like to recruit people again."

Yarrow is owned by GEC which last year took over the VSEL shipyard at Barrow. GEC gave assurances that it would keep both yards open.

George Kerr, a convenor at the yard, said unions were warned during the last round of redundancies in February to expect many more jobs would go because of a gap in the order book and in ship building programmes.

"We were told to expect hundreds of redundancies and hundreds we have received. The mood is depressed, heads are down and morale is low. Everybody is just low in spirits."

He did not expect the jobs situation to improve at the yard until next year.

Jobs cut as Powerstore shops are closed

NIGEL COPE

Administrators at Powerstore, the collapsed electrical retailer, closed 31 of the shops yesterday with the loss of 245 jobs. A further 24 head office jobs will also go, including those of founding chief executive Clive Viotman and finance director Bill Colley.

Most of the shops that will close are high street locations in the East Midlands and Yorkshire. The remaining 54 shops

will remain trading while a buyer is sought. Administrators Arthur Andersen said they had received several expressions of interest from potential buyers though none had been for the whole group. It is likely that the remaining 23 superstores will be attractive, though a buyer for the smaller high street outlets may prove elusive.

Commenting on the closures, David Duggins, an administrator, said: "We have undertaken

a broad ranging review of the financial and trading prospects for the businesses and individual stores. There are a number of cases where an electrical outlet is clearly not viable in the face of competition from out-of-town stores. Furthermore, in the case of some superstores, there is already a substantial over-capacity in those locations." As a result, seven of the out-of-town stores are to close. Mr Duggins said he has written

to over 700 customers who have paid or made deposits for goods which have not been delivered.

Powerstore was created in 1995 through the acquisition of a group of stores from London Electricity. Last year it bought 70 stores from East Midlands and Yorkshire Electricity. It collapsed at the end of April with debts of £20m after a period of intense competition which saw many retailers withdraw from the market.

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Bears set to make way for bulls on Russia's prospects

The Coming Russian Boom is a good read-me title for a book. The popular assumption, certainly within most of the business community, is that while China presents enormous economic opportunities for the West, Russia will remain pretty much a basket case. China, it is often argued, got its reform process in the right order, introducing the market economy before contemplating any greater measure of democracy. Russia, on the other hand, got things wrong by allowing political change before economic reforms were in place.

And so it is generally assumed that by the second decade of the next century China will be the world's largest economy, while Russia will still be mired in conflict, disorder and crime. This view of China may well turn out to be correct - you have to assume that something catastrophic will occur in China for it not to continue to grow very rapidly. But the perception of Russia ignores a string of positive economic features. These include the fact that Russia is not just the largest country by land area in the world, but it also has the greatest stock of natural resources: it is, for example, the world's largest producer of natural gas. Perhaps more important, it has a highly-educated population, far more highly educated than that of developing countries with similar income levels. So lack of education will not hold back economic growth.

Because the positive case is made so rarely, this new book* launched yesterday, deserves serious attention by business people and politicians alike. It is a tough-minded, rational, but fundamentally optimistic assessment of the chances of Russia becoming a prosperous functioning democracy within the next generation.



ECONOMIC VIEW
HAMISH McRAE

Both authors know Russia intimately. Professor Layard, head of the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics, has spent much of the past five years advising the Russian government on reform, while John Parker has been the *Economist* magazine's Moscow correspondent - in 1992 he received the Moscow Union of Journalists award for coverage of Russia. So both are, so to speak, on the side of Russia. But, as they remind us at the start, by and large the optimists

could not be more right than the pessimists so far. Their thesis is this. They set out by seeking to answer 12 questions about Russia, some principally political, others largely economic. These range from questions about Russia's instincts and history - is it naturally collectivist, autocratic or anti-Western? - to questions about the reform process: was there too much shock therapy, did the West do enough to help, and how do people live now?

'The fiscal deficit at 4.4 per cent of GDP is actually lower than that of the UK'

The economic balance sheet they draw up is quite positive. The general prognosis is good, since GDP seems to have stopped falling, there are massive natural resources, a highly edu-

ated population and plenty of investment finance. Good progress has been made in freeing prices and markets, and in privatising state property, but progress has been poor in controlling inflation, protecting the weak and in particular establishing a climate of legality. The authors see this last as the greatest barrier to economic progress, something which virtually all foreigners who have sought to do business in Russia would surely concur.

The political outlook, they feel, is

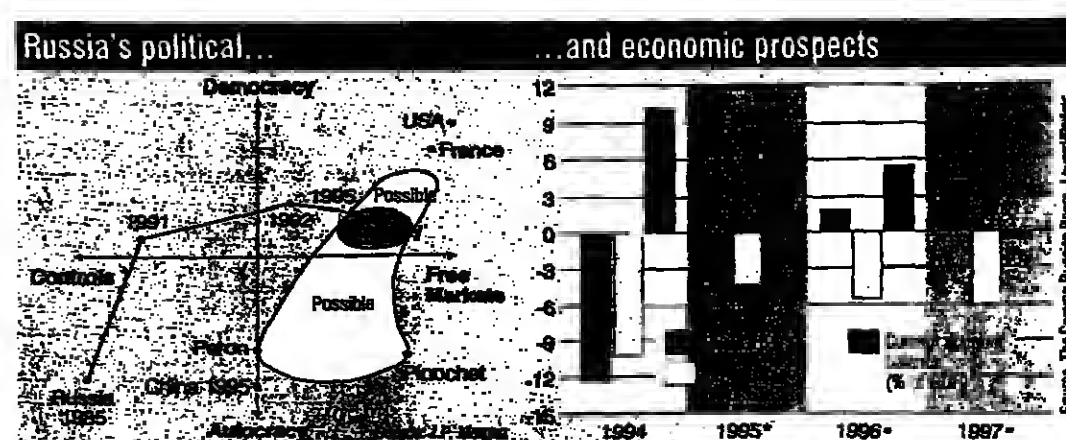
might Russia eventually become? - the authors produce the chart shown on the left, with degrees of political liberalism on the vertical axis and economic liberalism on the horizontal one. It will not, they think, become quite the fully-functioning democracy and market economy of the USA or France, but equally it will return to a controlled economy, though it might become very autocratic politically in a Peron/Fincochet manner.

Most likely? Well, "more of the same" is the number one scenario suggested by the authors, based on the assumption that a Yeltsin/Chernomyrdin group continue in power. Progress will continue, with the familiar two steps forward, one step back method of advance. The legal system will improve, gradually, but much regulation will continue. Inflation will fall but gradually. Above all, there will be good economic growth of 5 per cent a year or more.

The next most likely outcome is neo-nationalism, some form of left-wing nationalism, with higher inflation, retreating defence and seeking to put pressure on former Soviet republics to link more closely with Russia. It will fail - it would not be supported by the young - but meanwhile growth would be more muted, though the authors suggest, still at 4 per cent a year.

Other possibilities include non-communist nationalism - authoritarian rule from the centre or even the right - and the least likely, reform pure and simple. Under this last, with a government united behind economic reform, there would be a surge in foreign investment and they believe growth could be 6 per cent or more.

The most interesting thing here from an economic point of view is



that even if things go badly politically, there is a reasonable prospect of economic growth. Figures on the Russian economy are notoriously difficult to interpret. If you look at conventional GDP numbers, the economy seems to have continued to decline last year. If on the other hand you look at consumption, which after all is more than half of GDP, this has been rising since the huge fall in 1992. Layard and Parker believe the economy stopped shrinking in 1994. That is probably right, though some figures suggest that GDP fell further last year.

As a cross-check to the more optimistic assessment have a look at the graph on the right, which shows some estimates and forecasts for the Russian economy published by the US Bank J.P. Morgan in a circular on the forthcoming elections. In these figures, the Russian economy is just at the turning point now: there should be just under 2 per cent growth this year and 4 per cent next. Inflation (not shown) remains dreadful,

though it has come down from more than 300 per cent in 1994 to a forecast 75 per cent this year, but some of the other numbers are fine. Thus the fiscal deficit, at 4.4 per cent of GDP, is actually lower than that of the UK, and the current account is in substantial surplus. If you plot the Russian experience against that of, say, Poland, it looks wholly plausible that in two or three years the Russian economy will indeed be growing rapidly. Poland started its reform process three years before Russia, but by last year had become the fastest-growing economy in Europe. It is worth recalling that in the early stages of Polish reform, many people felt that Poland, far away to the east and without much of a market tradition, would find economic reform more difficult than, say, Czechoslovakia or Hungary. Now it is clear that Poland is doing as well as any former communist state.

Two final thoughts - reasons why, like Richard Layard and John Parker,

there will indeed be a coming Russian boom.

One is an historical perspective. During the first decade of this century Russia was the fastest-growing economy in the world. Two of the forces which drove that growth, natural resources and clever people, are just as strong today. And Russia's brand of rough entrepreneurship suggests that the drive to make money is just as strong now as it ever was.

The other thought concerns the improbability of a return to a state-controlled economy. I have met Chernomyrdin only once (I have never met Yeltsin) but one remark of his stuck in my mind. Did he, we asked him, see any case for a return to a more centralised economy? "No," he said, "I worked under the old system for 40 years. I know it. And it is because I know it, I also know how badly it works. So I would never want to go back."

The *Coming Russian Boom*, Richard Layard and John Parker, The Free Press (\$38)

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1.541	1.541	1.541	1.000	1.000	1.000
Canada	2.073	2.073	2.073	0.64	0.64	0.64
Germany	2.222	2.222	2.222	0.63	0.63	0.63
France	7.553	7.553	7.553	0.15	0.15	0.15
Italy	2.348	2.348	2.348	0.43	0.43	0.43
Japan	168.94	168.94	168.94	0.006	0.006	0.006
Belgium	12.438	12.438	12.438	0.08	0.08	0.08
Denmark	47.31	47.31	47.31	0.021	0.021	0.021
Netherlands	8.086	8.086	8.086	0.12	0.12	0.12
Norway	2.052	2.052	2.052	0.49	0.49	0.49
Spain	16.34	16.34	16.34	0.061	0.061	0.061
Sweden	10.77	10.77	10.77	0.093	0.093	0.093
Switzerland	1.930	1.930	1.930	0.75	0.75	0.75
Australia	1.622	1.622	1.622	0.61	0.61	0.61
Hong Kong	7.75	7.75	7.75	0.13	0.13	0.13
Malaysia	3.759	3.759	3.759	0.27	0.27	0.27
New Zealand	2.205	2.205	2.205	0.43	0.43	0.43
Saudi Arabia	5.675	5.675	5.675	0.18	0.18	0.18
Singapore	2.270	2.270	2.270	0.14	0.14	0.14

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	15943	0.0088
Australia	1.5208	0.61
Brazil	1.5208	0.61
Canada	2.073	0.64
China	8.267	0.12
France	7.553	0.15
Germany	2.222	0.63
Greece	345.70	0.0029
India	52.077	0.019
Indonesia	1.541	0.64
Italy	2.348	0.43
Japan	168.94	0.006
Korea	1.541	0.64
Malaysia	3.759	0.27
New Zealand	2.205	0.43
Saudi Arabia	5.675	0.18
Singapore	2.270	0.14

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; subject from spot rate add to spot rate.
Dollar rates quoted are at a premium.
Dollar rates quoted are at a discount.
For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0203 123 5033.
Cable cost 30p per minute (cheapest rate) 48p other times.

Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan
Bank of England	Deutsche Bank	Federal Reserve	Bank of Japan
3 month	3 month	3 month	3 month
5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%

Bond Yields

Country	5yr	10yr	30yr
UK	6.5%	7.5%	8.5%
US	6.5%	7.5%	8.5%
Germany	6.5%	7.5%	8.5%
France	6.5%	7.5%	8.5%

Money Market Rates

Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
UK	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
US	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Germany	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%

Tourist Rates

Country	£/US\$	£/Yen
USA	1.541	168.94
Japan	168.94	1.541
Germany	2.222	168.94
France	7.553	168.94

Latest Unit Trust Prices

LATEST OTC LISTINGS																							
Stock				Stock				Stock				Stock				Stock				Stock			
Sell	Buy	Yld		Sell	Buy	Yld		Sell	Buy	Yld		Sell	Buy	Yld		Sell	Buy	Yld		Sell	Buy	Yld	
AXA Equity & Life Unit Trust Managers																							
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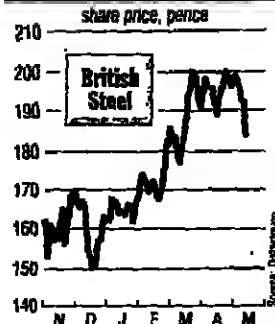
market report/shares

Takeover speculation drives Lucas Industries on up

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100
3739.2 -15.2
FT-SE 250
4512.4 -0.4
FT-SE 350
1897.1 -6.0
SEAQ VOLUME
710.6m shares,
35,282 bargains
Gifts Index
92.19 -0.21

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



Money is still riding on a takeover bid for Lucas Industries, the aerospace and car components group.

The shares were once again subjected to heavy trading and in a volatile session swung from a 5p gain to a 13.5p loss. They closed just 1p lower at 233p.

The group is, without doubt, in trading pact talks with Vauxhall, a US car parts group. The stock market hope is they will flush out a bidder for Lucas, perhaps GM of the US.

It was a bad day for Sid. The legendary private investor tempted into the Government's high powered privatisations had to contend with the sight of British Gas crashing 27p to 201p, lowest since 1990.

The gas price row between the company and its industry regulator, Ofgas, seems destined for the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. But even if Gas wins concessions, its dividend payments are likely to be cut.

The shares have been as high as 357p. They were sold at 135p nearly ten years ago. BT saw a merger with Cable and Wireless as a way of off-setting the continuing pressure from its unfriendly regulator. The deal, however, was called off and the shares have come down from 360p, after topping 380p. Last year, before the regulatory demands became apparent, they were riding at 414p.

The group also suffered a pinprick reversal when Freepages won a battle to keep the 0800 192 telephone number for its information services. The Gas bid wiped more than 7 points from the FT-SE



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

100 index and with the fall out engulfing other privatisation shares an early gain was transformed into a 15.2 fall to 3,739.2 by the close.

The setbacks could not have come at a worse time for the controversial Railtrack flotation, which had appeared to have won a surprising degree of support from private investors.

Bank of Scotland was the best performing blue chip, up 14p at 252.5p. It was spurred by confirmation the Standard Life insurance giant was contemplating the sale of its 32.2 per cent interest.

Any disposal would put BoS firmly into the takeover

arena although political considerations could be a problem for any predator. Renewed talk Barclays could have off its investment arm left the shares 1.5p down at 748.5p.

Meyer International, the timber group, put on 11p to 448p on reports of a bid from Wolsley.

Pearson, on suggestions it could have off its television side, and the ever present possibility of bid action, gained 13p to 712p.

British Aerospace provided some comfort for the army of Sids, gaining 11p to 874p on its missile link with Matra of France.

Orange, up 4.5p to 249.5p,

and United News & Media, 20p at 739p, were given a whirl on Footsie inclusion hopes.

Allied Domecq, the drinks group, managed a 2p gain to 502p ahead of what will be poor figures today. Grand Metropolitan, reporting on Thursday, rose 5p to 446p.

T&N fell 13p to 162p on the latest asbestos setback and in a weak building sector George Wimpey lost 5p to 142p.

Drug shares again attracted attention. British Biotech rose 22p to 2,955p ahead of its important presentation for its cancer treatment later this month and a launch of a vitamin tablet lifted Shire Pharmaceuticals 12p to 200p.

Cortecs International, on encouraging clinical results on a vaccine against lung infection, rose 18p to 387p.

Orb Estates rose 5p to 72p as the struggling group confirmed it was in reverse takeover talks with the un-

quoted Quintain property firm. Another property minnow, Prior, said it was in discussions with "various parties" which may lead to a bid. One involved is Jermyn Estates. Prior rose 2p to 110p and Jermyn was unchanged at 650p.

Newcomer Premier, a jobs agency, closed at 138p against a 133p placing.

Engineer Richards fell 8p to 25p following a warning of losses but Telspec, the computer group, rallied 43p to 533p after last week's profits warning.

Harry Ramsden's, the famed fish and chip enterprise, jumped 38p to 418p as takeover speculation returned. Rank Organisation and Whitbread remain the market's favourites to pounce.

Hay & Robertson gained 4p to 62p. It has recruited Scottish clubs Celtic and Rangers as well as two Italian clubs for its clothing lines. Hay has 11 premiership clubs as key players.

TAKING STOCK

Southend Property may have struck it rich in Australia. It has 29 million shares in Titan Resources where the price has more than doubled following what appears to be a substantial nickel discovery. The property group's Aussie stake, in the balance sheet at £2m, is now worth £12m. Southend's shares were valued at 71.5p in January when British Land, NMI Rothschild and new chairman Graeme Jackson moved in. The Barclay brothers are also shareholders. There are worries its 92p a share asset valuation, which was current at the time of the Jackson deal, will be pulled back although Titan is now worth 10p a share. The shares rose 2p to 42p.

Just a character merchant, moved from Oxfes to AIM, gaining 1p to 4.5p in the process.

Alcoholic Beverages

Alcoholic Beverages
Guinness 100.00 100.00
Heavenly Bodies 100.00 100.00
J & S 100.00 100.00
K & N 100.00 100.00
L & S 100.00 100.00
M & S 100.00 100.00
N & S 100.00 100.00
O & S 100.00 100.00
P & S 100.00 100.00
Q & S 100.00 100.00
R & S 100.00 100.00
S & S 100.00 100.00
T & S 100.00 100.00
U & S 100.00 100.00
V & S 100.00 100.00
W & S 100.00 100.00
X & S 100.00 100.00
Y & S 100.00 100.00
Z & S 100.00 100.00

Banks, Merchant

Banks, Merchant
Barclays 100.00 100.00
HSBC 100.00 100.00
Lloyds 100.00 100.00
NatWest 100.00 100.00
Royal Bank 100.00 100.00
Santander 100.00 100.00
TSB 100.00 100.00
Windsor 100.00 100.00

Banks, Retail

Banks, Retail
Bank of Scotland 100.00 100.00
Bank of Ireland 100.00 100.00
Bank of Wales 100.00 100.00
CIBC 100.00 100.00
First Direct 100.00 100.00
Halifax 100.00 100.00
Lloyds Bank 100.00 100.00
NatWest Bank 100.00 100.00
Royal Bank of Scotland 100.00 100.00
Santander Bank 100.00 100.00
TSB Bank 100.00 100.00
Windsor Bank 100.00 100.00

Diversified Industrials

Diversified Industrials
Baker Hughes 100.00 100.00
Baker International 100.00 100.00
Baker Services 100.00 100.00
Baker Technology 100.00 100.00
Baker Utilities 100.00 100.00
Baker Ventures 100.00 100.00
Baker Worldwide 100.00 100.00
Baker & Co 100.00 100.00
Baker & Sons 100.00 100.00
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Ruznama to run into Oaks picture

Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON

The segment of common land they call the Knavesmire has been the site of York races since 1731, but seldom has it held the influence that the old turf will provide this week.

The grass on this racecourse is recognised as being late to mature each season and a similar description can be bolted to this year's Derby picture. Following a series of Blue Riband trials that have failed to illuminate, there is plentiful space for Epsom aspirants to elbow their way through the crowd.

York's first meeting of the year will consequently be huge significance. Whatever wins either tomorrow's Dante Stakes or the Glasgow Stakes the following day will jump like a cricket up the betting list.

In the last 10 years three horses (Shahrastani, Reference Point and Erhaab) have won the Derby after success in the Dante and the imagination does not have to be too far-fetched to envisage a fourth joining the ranks. Shaamit should have been in the field but Willie Haggas's colt suffered an overreach

on Newmarket's Limestone on Saturday and now misses his trial. His trainer will be scrutinising passages from Godolphin's handbook as he follows the Lammtarra route and goes straight to Epsom.

These days no-one likes getting their gauntlets dirty, and Nash House, the Dante favourite, is no veteran of the tracks

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Polydamas
(York 4.10)
NB: Double Diamond
(York 2.35)

himself. He has won only a Newbury maiden, but this slender evidence has not prevented Ladbrokes making him 5-4 for tomorrow and joint favourite for the Blue Riband itself.

Others whose prices may be subject to a slash and burn policy are Dushyantor, who could emerge this week as Henry Cecil's No 1 Derby challenger, and Glory Of Dancer. The latter is trained by Paul Kelleway, who is to self-deprecate what John McCracken is to hang-dogging (or self-deprecation for that matter). Nevertheless, the second by Kelleway's charge in

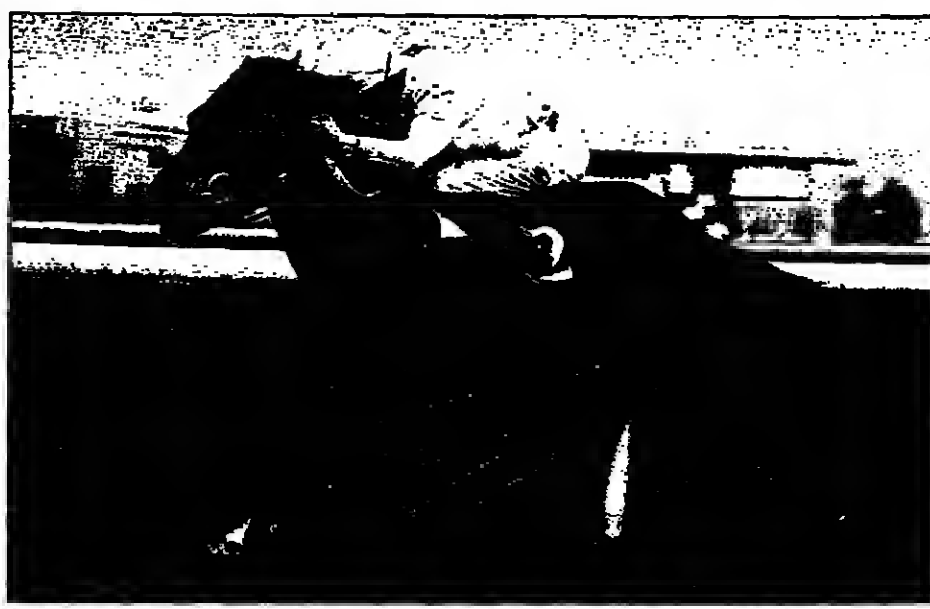
Sandown's Classic Trial, when giving weight to Sandilana, is one of the few scores on the door.

Thursday's Glasgow was used to be about as remarkable as losing tickets on the Silver Ring floor, but three years ago it was captured by the subsequent Epsom victor, Commander In Chief. Then, 12 months ago, Tammie, who was to follow home Lammtarra, was successful, stamping the event as a trial of some import.

This week, Nash House's nearest rival in the hierarchy at Manton, Astor Place, will play a pivotal role, along with King Alex, whose trainer, Roger Charlton, was the Lingfield Derby Trial on Saturday with the inferior Mystic Knight.

Compared with what is to follow, the horse-dances of today's card is less appetising, though there will be some fluctuation in the Oaks market after the Musidora Stakes. The last winner of the race in go on to take the Classic was Snow Bride in 1989, but every year since then York has provided a horse for the Epsom frame.

Manton is represented by the Knapton winner Sea Spray and Magnificient Style will be supplemented for the Oaks at



Sea Spray, who launches Peter Chapple Hyan's York challenge Photograph: Ed Byrne

a cost of £15,000 if she runs well. But the best option may be the only runner who already holds the Classic entry, Ruznama (3.40), who is thought by Barry Hills to be considerably more talented than the animal which was buried behind Polydamas at Newmarket earlier this month.

Mark Johnston must like the look of the first televised race as he saddles two beasts which have the credentials to win it. Slight preference is for Double Diamond (next best 2.35).

In the following race there is a little to choose between Top Banana and Master Planner

(3.05), who goes well early in the season, especially at this track. The bet of the day, however, is POLYDAMAS (nap 4.10), who looked as though he had a few fashers to spare on his poorly body when fourth in a fast-run handicap at Newmarket earlier this month.

Jockey Club put focus on horses' safety

The Jockey Club have made the welfare of the horse a "strategic issue" as animal rights becomes an ever more important issue and racing comes under increasing scrutiny, writes John Cobb. And racing authorities in other countries are using the whip regulations in Britain as a model for their own rules. Sir Thomas Pilkington, the Senior Steward, reported yesterday.

"We're very alert in the position of the horse without sport," the Club's Executive Director,

Christopher Foster, said. "We are continuing improvements to veterinary care on racecourses and encouraging courses to invest in people who have the knowledge to improve the underfoot condition of tracks."

David Pipe, the Club's Director of Public Affairs, reported that there has been a positive response from the public to the more stringent whip regulations. "We used to receive letters of complaint by the hundred when there was a bad in-

cident, now they are in the tens."

"The RSPCA have been fulsome in their praise for the action that racing has taken to make the sport as safe and fair as possible. We've worked hard to remove the traps."

The welfare of punters and racegoers too is high on the list of the Jockey Club's priorities with a pledge to improve the flow of information to those at the track and in the betting shop. "Information for pun-

ters has increased tremendously over the past 10 years," Foster said, "and the push to speed up stewards' inquiries and to start races at the advertised times has been a success."

"But we will continue to press for improvements in that area. There is nothing more disastrous to the chap who wants to pop into a betting shop for two minutes to watch a race or listen to it on the telephone than to find that it is going to be off six or seven minutes late."

YORK
2.35: HUMOURLESS quickened to win by five lengths at Pontefract. This is a much tougher, but Luca Cumani believes this colt has all the makings of a useful performer.

3.05: Everglades finished with a flourish behind Emerald at Salisbury last time but may again find his furrows too soon. JAVANTEE is high in the handicap and may find Newmarket win at this trip but he did a disadvantageous draw that day. The suspended Frankie Devor is replaced today by capable 7lb claimer Martin Dwyer.

3.40: RUZNAMA, who recorded a win over Obessive last year, was

giving Magnificient Style 5lb when 1 1/4 lengths behind her at Newmarket last time and will have come on for the run. Henry Cecil's filly has received glowing reports for her gallops work but was the first under pressure at Newmarket.

4.10: CASUAL WATER is suited by this trip, made great strides last year and his yard is in form over jumps.

YORK
2.00 Stakes Pad
2.35 Humourless
3.05 Javannee
3.40 Ruznama
4.10 Summer Spell

GOING: Good to Firm (Good in places).
STALLS: Round course - middle left; Straight course - standard side.
ON-PAUSE ADVANTAGES: None.
Left-hand, 14-15, 16-17, 18-19, 20-21, 22-23, 24-25, 26-27, 28-29, 30-31, 32-33, 34-35, 36-37, 38-39, 40-41, 42-43, 44-45, 46-47, 48-49, 50-51, 52-53, 54-55, 56-57, 58-59, 60-61, 62-63, 64-65, 66-67, 68-69, 70-71, 72-73, 74-75, 76-77, 78-79, 80-81, 82-83, 84-85, 86-87, 88-89, 90-91, 92-93, 94-95, 96-97, 98-99, 100-101, 102-103, 104-105, 106-107, 108-109, 110-111, 112-113, 114-115, 116-117, 118-119, 120-121, 122-123, 124-125, 126-127, 128-129, 130-131, 132-133, 134-135, 136-137, 138-139, 140-141, 142-143, 144-145, 146-147, 148-149, 150-151, 152-153, 154-155, 156-157, 158-159, 160-161, 162-163, 164-165, 166-167, 168-169, 170-171, 172-173, 174-175, 176-177, 178-179, 180-181, 182-183, 184-185, 186-187, 188-189, 190-191, 192-193, 194-195, 196-197, 198-199, 200-201, 202-203, 204-205, 206-207, 208-209, 210-211, 212-213, 214-215, 216-217, 218-219, 220-221, 222-223, 224-225, 226-227, 228-229, 230-231, 232-233, 234-235, 236-237, 238-239, 240-241, 242-243, 244-245, 246-247, 248-249, 250-251, 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Rusedski will turn to Teacher

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS
reports from Rome

Having been given a lesson in converting opportunities by Goran Ivanisevic in the first round of the Italian Open here yesterday, Britain's Greg Rusedski will start working with a new teacher at the weekend: Brian Teacher, the American who won the Australian Open in 1980 and rose to No 7 in the world.

Rusedski will link up with Teacher before the St. Polten tournament in Austria next week. The 41-year-old from Los Angeles will prepare Rusedski for the French Open and the grass-court season, culminating in Wimbledon, and a decision will then be made whether Teacher continues to coach Rusedski for the remainder of the year.

"I hope he can help me attain the mentality of a top 10 player, so I can play the big points better," Rusedski said after losing to the second-seeded Ivanisevic, 7-6, 6-3. "Also I want Brian to work on my return of serve - he has worked with Agassi - plus improve my backhand. These three things are the most important to me now. Brian understands the mental aspect of being in a Grand Slam and playing important points, as he's played there and been a top 10 player."

The new arrangement evolved after Rusedski's previous coach, Scott Brooke, decided he wanted to spend more time at home in America. Warren Jacques, the former British Davis Cup captain, travelled with Rusedski towards the end of last year. In an endeavour to find a replacement for Brooke, Rusedski's agent consulted Brad Filbert, Andre Agassi's coach, who recommended Teacher. Rusedski's mighty serve has taken the Canadian-born 22-year-old to the position where he regularly competes with the best players in the world. The next

step is for him to improve his all-round efficiency and to have the confidence to beat them. "He was missing a lot," Ivanisevic said after yesterday's match. "I'm lucky he couldn't put five shots in a row in the court."

Rusedski created seven break points, and converted only one. That enabled him to break back to 5-5 when Ivanisevic served for the opening set. Rusedski's service return being good enough to lure the Croat into missing with a backhand. The prospect of an upset after Ivanisevic netted a shot and offered Rusedski a set point was evaporated as quickly as it appeared. Rusedski could hardly be criticised in this instance, as Ivanisevic whisked the opportunity away with a splendid angled forehand pass.

Rusedski found himself 4-0 down in the tie-break, but saved three set points before losing the shoot-out, 7-3.

It was the third meeting between the big-serving left-handers, and the first on a clay court. Ivanisevic also won the first two, played on fast indoor carpet surfaces in 1994. The difference here was that Ivanisevic's drop shots outnumbered his aces.

The Croat, who has won four titles this year, claims to have tighter control of his temperament nowadays, but he was fortunate to escape with only one rebuke for throwing his racket during the opening games of the second set.

Rusedski again had the first opportunities to break before faltering in the eighth game, hitting a forehand over the baseline after Ivanisevic had dealt comfortably with a second serve. The Croat served out on his second match point then moaned about the heavy balls, the fact that Rusedski persisted in slicing and would not allow him to find a rhythm, and just about everything else.

He did not realise how lucky he was to escape the thunderstorms which followed.



Goran Ivanisevic hits out during his victory over Britain's Greg Rusedski in Rome yesterday. Photograph: Reuters

Graf sets record of 332 weeks as No 1

Steffi Graf set a record of 332 weeks as women's world No 1 in the latest rankings released by the Women's Tennis Association four yesterday.

The German, beaten in the quarter-finals of last week's Italian Open by Martina Hingis, surpassed the previous mark of 331 weeks set by Czech-born Martina Navratilova of the United States.

"This one should stand for a long time. I don't try for records but this is one of them that will always stand out," Graf, 26, said in a telephone link-up from

Berlin, where she is playing this week. Ivan Lendl leads all men's No 1's with 270 weeks spent at the top.

"I never was the kind of person who counted the weeks or years, but to hear the number is really amazing," Graf said.

Graf first took the No 1 spot on 17 August, 1987, ending Navratilova's reign. She remained on top for a record 186 consecutive weeks until March 11, 1991, when Monica Seles took over. Graf's current streak as No 1 stands at 49 weeks.

Brighton's Clare Wood will take the first steps towards regaining her place in the world's top 100 when she competes in the first round proper of the Rover International Championship at the National Tennis Centre in Cardiff today. The 28-year-old, who slipped from 78 in the rankings to 187 after suffering a serious hamstring injury, is determined to begin her climb as soon as possible - and has been helped by being given a wild card into the £70,000 event.

"The event in Cardiff will give me the opportunity to earn some valuable ranking points and I just hope I am able to take that," the three-times British champion said.

The biggest threat is the top seed Irma Spierke, who beat Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and Mary Pierce on her way to lifting the Florida Open earlier this year.

LASTEST WTA RANKINGS: 1-5 Graf (Ger); 2- Seles (Ser); 3- Sanchez Vicario (Esp); 4- Pierce (F); 5- Wood (GB); 6- Hingis (Svi); 7- Navratilova (US); 8- Davenport (US); 9- Lendl (US); 10- Kriek (Zim); 11- Agassi (US); 12- Rusedski (GB); 13- Kucuk (Tur); 14- Kucuk (Tur); 15- Kucuk (Tur); 16- Kucuk (Tur); 17- Kucuk (Tur); 18- Kucuk (Tur); 19- Kucuk (Tur); 20- Kucuk (Tur); 21- Kucuk (Tur); 22- Kucuk (Tur); 23- Kucuk (Tur); 24- Kucuk (Tur); 25- Kucuk (Tur); 26- Kucuk (Tur); 27- Kucuk (Tur); 28- Kucuk (Tur); 29- Kucuk (Tur); 30- Kucuk (Tur); 31- Kucuk (Tur); 32- Kucuk (Tur); 33- Kucuk (Tur); 34- Kucuk (Tur); 35- Kucuk (Tur); 36- Kucuk (Tur); 37- Kucuk (Tur); 38- Kucuk (Tur); 39- Kucuk (Tur); 40- Kucuk (Tur); 41- Kucuk (Tur); 42- Kucuk (Tur); 43- Kucuk (Tur); 44- Kucuk (Tur); 45- Kucuk (Tur); 46- Kucuk (Tur); 47- Kucuk (Tur); 48- Kucuk (Tur); 49- Kucuk (Tur); 50- Kucuk (Tur); 51- Kucuk (Tur); 52- Kucuk (Tur); 53- Kucuk (Tur); 54- Kucuk (Tur); 55- Kucuk (Tur); 56- Kucuk (Tur); 57- Kucuk (Tur); 58- Kucuk (Tur); 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SPORT

'Being the only English player now in Italy it's important for me to do well'
PAUL INCE on life at Internazionale and his future in Serie A

Page 22

Bates claims Gullit will not be hurt by Harding row

Football
TREVOR HAYLETT

On his first day as the new Chelsea player-manager, Ruud Gullit experienced some of the problems which made it easy for his predecessor to depart, when Ken Bates decided to tear up the agreement that would have seen Matthew Harding eventually take over from him as chairman.

With Glenn Hoddle, a close ally of Harding, having moved on to coach England, Bates has sought to reassert his authority at Stamford Bridge. Harding remains a director but by terminating the deal thrashed out in March and designed to put a stop to the boardroom rancour which saw Harding banned from the directors box, Chelsea have turned away the £10m he had agreed to provide for new players.

However Bates says Gullit will not be compromised in the transfer market. "We have already made arrangements elsewhere to ensure the manager is not disadvantaged in his player negotiations," Bates said. "He is already looking at a couple of Continental players which will not be affected by the change in arrangements."

They are the Juventus goalkeeper Gianluca Vialli and Bayern Munich's Jurgen Klinsmann and it was Harding's visit to Germany last week in talk with Klinsmann which further fuelled Bates' anger towards his rival. Part of the agreement, which had remained unsigned, was for Harding to become vice-chairman and also head a committee dealing in the club's playing affairs. Bates said it was incompatible with that responsibility to be discussing transfers

without the knowledge of other board members. Gullit remained nonplussed by the latest twist in the power struggle. Helping to launch BBC TV's summer sports schedule he said: "I don't know what the reason is for what has happened and I don't care. I have my budgets so I know what to spend and all I'm interested in is that the thing be resolved as quickly as possible."

A statement issued by Chelsea Village, which owns the club and leases Stamford Bridge, said: "The negotiations have reached a stalemate where the requirements of neither side could be satisfied. The further investments and assistance by Mr Harding which would have flowed from that agreement will not proceed."

Harding will now convert £5m of unsecured loan stock to give him 14,285,714 ordinary shares. He also has the right to lift his holding to 25.1 per cent yet the multi-millionaire's dream to become chairman is doomed, at least during the lifespan of the present regime. Returning from a business trip to San Francisco last week, Bates was dismayed to learn of new Harding demands and called a halt to the protracted negotiations. "It has dragged on

long enough and there is no giving back, the matter is over," he said. "The goalposts kept moving and it was time to put up or shut up."

"I've always said that I saw Matthew as my natural successor and I have lots of regrets that it has ended in this way. But life has to go on. You can't keep hanging around for the train if it is not going to leave the station. You have to get another train."

RFU imposes six-month ban on Back

Rugby Union
STEVE BALE

Though he protested to the end that he had mistaken his victim's identity, Neil Back yesterday incurred a six-month suspension from the Rugby Football Union for pushing the referee at the end of Leicester's highly charged Pilkington Cup final defeat by Bath.

The ban is not what it seems, since the six months include the close season and leaves the 27-year-old recent England flanker free to play again from 4 November, always supposing Leicester are still under the auspices of the RFU at that time. As well as the beginning of

next season, Back will have to miss summer benefit matches in aid of Max Brito, the Ivory Coast player paralysed during last year's World Cup, and Philippe Sella, who is leaving France to play for Saracens. He will also be ineligible to make the Barbarians' tour of Japan or Leicester's pre-season visit to South Africa if it takes place. The real total is more like 10 weeks, a lenient sentence for such a blatant breaking of one of rugby's taboos. Nevertheless, Back's club yesterday professed their disappointment at its "severity" and said they would consider an appeal after receiving the decision of the RFU disciplinary panel. Last week Back agreed a contract with Leicester.

Things have come a long way from the immediate post-match period when both the RFU media liaison man, Colin Henbridge, and referees' officer, Steve Griffiths, were frantically trying to play it down. On the contrary, the hearing found that Back had pushed Steve Lander - an incontrovertible conclusion in view of the video evidence - and "was therefore guilty of conduct which was prejudicial to the interests of the game".

The incident occurred within minutes of the hotly disputed penalty try for persistent offences which had effectively handed the cup to Bath. But at the time Back said that, far from taking out his disappointment on the referee, he had thought he was pushing Andy Robinson, his Bath opposite number.

This was accepted by the panel - made up of three RFU committee members, Bob Rogers, Peter Trunkfield and the former England No 8 Bob Taylor - making it hard to know what he has been punished for. "The panel believed Neil Back was telling the truth in his evidence and at no time doubted his honesty and integrity," the RFU stated.

Back has never varied in his account that it was only when Dean Richards, the Leicester captain, informed him in the Twickenham dressing-room that he found out what he had done. "I didn't realise the game had ended," he said. "I ran in to join the other forwards and believed I was giving Robinson - offside again - a push to clear the way. When Dean told me I had pushed the referee I went into his room and apologised."

In fact Back is shown by the video to have been standing alongside Lander when he blew the final whistle.

Referee 'satisfied' with punishment

Steve Lander, the Pilkington Cup final referee pushed by Neil Back, said he had "no personal reaction" to the player's ban. But he added: "I am absolutely satisfied that the principle of not laying hands on the referee has been upheld."

"You can feel vulnerable out there with such power and energy surrounding you. It is the first incident of that type I have been involved in and, as far as I know, it is a one-off."

"There has always been a good relationship between players and referees. You can always talk to them afterwards and let's hope that that continues. I am sure that it will."

Richard Moon, the secretary of the newly formed Rugby Union Players' Association, said: "The stated aim of Rupa

is to maintain fair play and good sportsmanship. There has been concern about the attitude of players on the field in the professional era. But amateur or pro, the referee's word is law and nobody should put that fact in jeopardy."

"Obviously the RFU felt that the game had been brought into disrepute and we support this attempt to uphold the good name of rugby. We must avoid at all costs a situation as in soccer where footballers feel that they can ping-pong the referee around."

"We don't want to go down the road of the other sports where the officials are abused and jostled by players. Rugby players will be reminded by this ban that they are in the shop window and watched by millions of youngsters."



Surrey's Graham Thorpe is bowled by Martin McCague at The Oval, Report, page 22

Photograph: David Ashdown

Robson eyes third Brazilian

Emerson, the £4m-rated midfielder, will today become Middlesbrough's third Brazilian after being tempted to leave the Portuguese champions, Porto, to join Juninho and Branco on Teesside.

Robson stunned football when he signed Juninho for £4.75m from São Paulo at the start of last season. Branco arrived in February as a free agent and eventually joined the club in an 18-month deal after protracted contract and work-permit negotiations. Neither player has shown the form which took them into the Brazilian team, but that has not deterred Robson from bringing in another highly skilled South American.

Ian Holloway, the Queen's Park Rangers midfielder, yesterday returned to Bristol Rovers as their player-manager on a three-year contract. The 33-year-old Bristolian succeeded John Ward, who parted company with the Second Division club last week.

The goalkeeper Bobby Mimms has been released by Blackburn at his own request. The 32-year-old, a long-time understudy to England's Tim Flowers, played only two first-team matches last season after moving to Ewood Park from Tottenham for £250,000 in 1990.

The Wales manager, Bobby Gould, yesterday named the Chelsea striker Mark Hughes in his squad for the opening World Cup qualifier against San Marino in the mountain-top state on June 2. But there was no place for the Wimbledon midfielder, Vinnie Jones in the squad of 21.

Ryan Giggs, of Double winners Manchester United, and Dean Saunders, of Galatasaray, who like Hughes both missed last month's friendly defeat in Switzerland, were also included.

Wales Squad (vs San Marino, World Cup qualifier, 2 June): Southall (Everton), Coyne (Rangers), Marshall (Wrexham), Bowen (Bristol), Coleman (Bristol), Jenkins (Cardiff), Hughes (Cardiff), Symons (Man City), Brown (Bristol Rovers), Jones (Newcastle), Evans (Exeter), Lloyd (Cardiff), Llewellyn (Cardiff), Pennington (Sheff Wed), Robinson (Cardiff), Saunders (Cardiff), Taylor (Sheff Wed), Standby players: Ward (Notts County), Evans (Walsley), Phillips (Wrexham), Page (Wrexham), Corrie (Birmingham), Davies (Man Utd), J. Jones (Liverpool).

Symonds hints at England

Cricket

DEREK HODGSON reports from Bristol India 406 & 144-6 dec & Gloucestershire 251-4 dec & Match drawn

An hour after Gloucestershire had announced that a statement on Andrew Symonds' future - is he English or is he Australian? - would come at the end of the season, the player dropped the broadest hint that he sees any Test future with England.

Symonds has refused to speak to the English media, but in an interview with an Indian journalist, Joseph Hoover of the *Deccan Herald* of Bangalore, he said: "I'd like to play Test cricket, but first I want to play to the best of my ability and establish myself at first class. Then if they [England] give me a break, I'd be happy to play."

Symonds did not advance his Test future greatly yesterday, adding 28 in the second innings after his 120 not out in the first, as both sides declared in an effort to win. Mark Alleyne, captain in the absence of Courtney Walsh and Jack Russell, declared overnight, 155 behind.

The pitch showed signs of wear on a crisp morning, and India had lost both openers for 22 by the seventh over. Saurav Ganguly was more circumspect at one end while the pursuit continued at the other. When Dickie Davis appeared, he won some turn and took a five-run return catch to dismiss Mohammad Azharuddin. He might have had more wickets had fielders been able to hang on to two difficult chances.

Gloucestershire looked vigorous and alert in the field, but once committed to the chase, 300 to win in a minimum of 60 overs, were less certain. Against Javangi Srinath and Bapu Pra-

sad, both seaming the new ball, any hopes of a chase were lost in the clutter of falling stumps.

Rob Dawson was caught behind off Prasad's first ball; Monte Lynch lost his off stump to Srinath before Hewson suffered a similar fate at the other end: 6 for 3 in four overs. That brought in Symonds to join Tim Hancock and, for perhaps two overs, the county looked to be still hunting. But at 63, India's relief seamer Ganguly won extra bounce and Symonds, half forward, was hit on the thigh. Up went Ray Julian's finger and off wandered Symonds.

Five overs later, Hancock tried and failed to lift the slow left-arm Sagi Raju over long off and the question then became: "Could India win?" Davis and Jon Lewis hung on for 20 overs before Lewis, 22 not out, took India into the 66th over and the draw.

More reports, Scoreboard, page 22

Ghana accuse LTA of 'racism'

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS

The Lawn Tennis Association has failed in its attempt to buy home advantage from Ghana for Britain's second round Davis Cup tie the weekend after Wimbledon, amid rumblings of "racist undertones".

Rejecting the LTA's approach, which was made after David Lloyd, the British captain, had expressed concern about the health of his players, the Ghanaian Tennis Federation said it wanted, "to give our fans the chance to see the match".

Accra's state-owned Daily Graphic took a stronger line.

"Certainly the racist undertones in the request by the British Davis Cup team can hardly be missed," the newspaper said, "and it is sad to reflect that such effusions should come from the country that disregarded the threat of illness to colonise Ghana, then called the Gold Coast."

"In a way, however, we understand the fear of the British Davis Cup team, coming from a country now afflicted by the mad cow disease. They know Ghana is one of the countries which imports British beef and are, therefore, likely to be served British beef while they are in Accra."

The International Tennis Federation, had offered to pay Ghana's expenses - estimated at around £25,000 - if they would agree to switch the Euro/African Zone Group Two tie.

Lloyd said yesterday: "If the match had been in Honolulu I would have done exactly the same, because it's an impossible schedule. We thought it might be mutually beneficial."

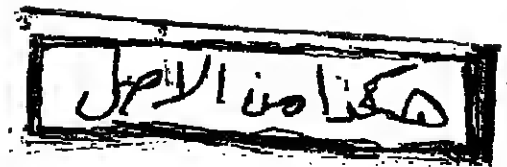
"It happens in football and it's happened in tennis before. I thought it would have been a great opportunity for the people of Ghana to see the last few days of Wimbledon. But if they don't want to do it, then, of course, it's up to them."

Italian Open, page 23

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- ACROSS**
- Homework about Roman law is to cause bewilderment (7)
 - Representatives will get support and specially made seat (7)
 - Team responsible for The Armistice? (7)
 - Picky type takes British walk (7)
 - The old woman has some movement (9)
 - Yet time for a race? (5)
 - Chicks for local roses (5)
 - A host, dripping, by river needs a drier (4,5)
 - Effect of injury in Leeds, bone broken (4,5)
 - Could be worth having a go? (5)
 - Move camera to follow one
- DOWN**
- Much talk about Latin dish (7)
 - High regard of some mature spectators (7)
 - Reportedly feline connections (5)
 - Origin of music college's unknown, put up to make use of stone? (9)

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